# MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE

## F. B. MEYER

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Addresses on the Deeper Christian Life

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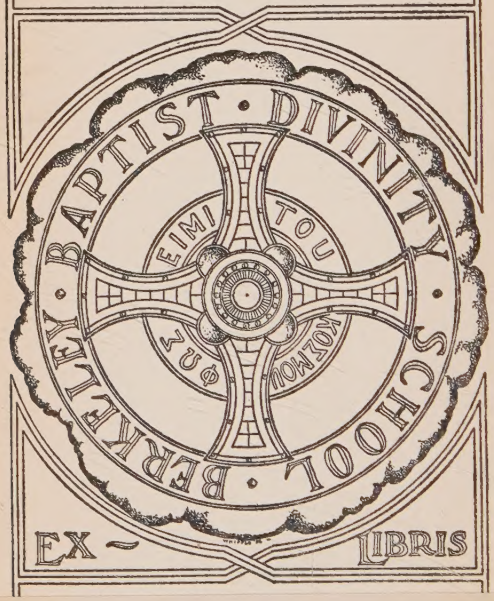


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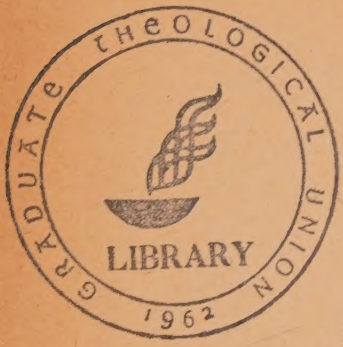
# Meet for the Master's Use




BY

F. B. MEYER

Author of "Light on Life's Duties," "The Secret of Guidance," "The Christ-Life for the Self-Life," etc.

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# MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

## I.

## GOD IS NEAR.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.

"Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."—Isaiah vi., 1-8.

One afternoon, about four o'clock, Isaiah, who was then in early middle life, found himself one of a great crowd of worshipers slowly ascending the temple's steps. Together with them he passed the lower platform and still climbed until at last he stood at the summit, at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Standing there, he little realized that that afternoon was to be the epochal moment of his life; but that afternoon was to introduce an altogether new element into his life work.

Standing there upon that highest step, in the direct line of vision lay, first, the altar upon which the afternoon sacrifice was to be made; beyond it a laver where the priests washed their feet; and beyond that the tall cedar doors that opened upon the Holy Place, which indeed would have unfolded presently, as to Zachariah in after days when he went to offer incense while the people stood without in prayer.

On either side stood probably two hundred and fifty Levites, with the instruments of David in their hands, prepared to sing the psalms which were so famous, and about which their Babylonian captors in after days said:

"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

As Isaiah stood there wrapped in thought, those who were nearest him had no idea what was transpiring; but he was swept away from all those sights and sounds, from the sun in mid sky, from the glistening marble of the temple, from the music of the Levite band, from all the crowds that pressed him on every side, and he beheld the sapphire throne of the King Himself. He heard the prayer or chant of the seraphim, and for a moment his whole soul was steeped in the rapture of that vision. But a moment after he was plunged in the profoundest contrition of soul as he contrasted himself with those who served God with sinless lips, and he cried:

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

Now why was this? Partly because after the golden years of Uzziah's reign, in which money and

splendor were corrupting the hearts of the people, it was necessary that the leaders at least, or many like Isaiah who stood in the forefront, should be lifted to a higher level. You must understand from the previous chapters of his book how the dwellers of Zion, the men and women of Jerusalem, and, indeed, all the people, were being corrupted by the sin, the fashion, the worldliness, and the money making of their time, and how needful it was, therefore, that God should raise a new standard amongst them by the hand of Isaiah, who stood closest to Him.

It may be that in this country at this time, the very prosperity of your land, the years of peace, the great influx of populations, and the increase of wealth have been subtly undermining the religious life of your people, so that some of your holy customs are being broken down. Perhaps family worship is no longer maintained as it was. The children are no longer trained, as once, in the habits of godliness. The high morale of your people, derived from your noble ancestry, may have been disintegrating while you devoted your energies in other directions than in whole-hearted devotion to God. At such times it is God's habit to call around Himself His Isaiahs, His servants, those who stand nearest to Him, the members of His church, and to lift them up to a new level of Christian living, that from that moment they may be the pivot on which a lever may work to lift the entire nation.

As I have traveled through your great country, in city after city I have met with crowds of your fellow-countrymen, especially your ministers, and I

have been struck with the hunger which exists on every hand for deeper and intenser spiritual life. It appears to me as if God were calling upon the people of His own Church in the United States to stand up before Jesus Christ as their King, to learn from Him some deeper and mightier power than that which has been vibrating lately amongst them. Let us confidently look to Him for it.

But before you and I can become what we want to be, there must first be a humbling process. We must be laid low in the dust before God. Just in proportion as we are prepared to descend, will we ascend. Let us get down in the dust before Jesus Christ, our Lord, and let each one of us become convicted, and cry:

"Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips."

There is a threefold conviction here, of personal unworthiness, of the nearness of God, and of the one method by which the heart of man can be pacified.

## I.

THERE IS, FIRST, THE CONVICTION OF UNWORTHINESS:

"Woe, is me! for I am undone."

The sixth chapter of course follows the fifth. If you read the latter you will understand how earnestly Isaiah had been pursuing his prophetic work. This man, who of all Israel seemed to be the purest and sweetest, is the man that bows the lowest and is most convinced of sin. God's children need to learn that lesson too. He had done good work, but

God saw that he could do better, and so convicted him of the comparative unworthiness of his past ministry. Thus it befell that the man by whom God had spoken through five chapters was a man who confessed to having unclean lips.

Now you may have a good record lying behind you. It may be that for five chapters of your life you have been ministering to people, to children, to the waifs and strays of your city, and you have been greatly owned. But God wants to teach you a better lesson, to make you more mightily powerful, to baptise you more with the Holy Ghost and with fire; and therefore He takes even you, true-hearted as you are, and brings you down into the place where the Holy Spirit will hold up your past life, and bid you review it until you, who have been looked up to by everyone as an example, and quoted as the most devoted and earnest of men, and idolized by many who have been moved by your eloquence—as you come beneath the light that shall fall upon you from the face of Jesus Christ, shall cry:

"I am an undone man."

You will notice that this conviction was wrought through the vision of Jesus, and indeed that is the only vision that will really convince us of sin. We need to stand beneath the light that falls from His face. He is amongst us at this moment. He is passing through this assembly and looking down deep into your hearts; and as you look up into His face, do you not realize that there is a look of grief and sorrow there, because in your work there has been so much of yourself and so little of His love? Does He not reveal to you the poverty of your

motive, the lowness of your aim, your greater thought of what men might consider of you than of what He might say? Let the light of the living Christ fall upon you now, the light of the coming Christ, the silvery light of the second advent, the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, the light of the great white throne; and as this falls upon your heart today, and you see what He wants you to be and what you are, you shall say:

"I am undone."

There is another thought. Isaiah saw the worship of the blessed ones: "One cried to another."

I like to think of that. It was as if one of them cried, "Your strains are not lifted high enough; higher, brothers, higher!" And he cried across the intervening space to the seraphim opposite, and bade them rise to a higher note, till the chorus swelled and rose and broke. I have heard a bird in the spring morning cry to all the songsters of the glade till the whole woodland has rung again. Sometimes in our prayer meeting an earnest man has shaken the very gates of heaven and has stirred the whole meeting. That is what we want. And as I tell you of a richer, fuller life, a life more abundant than many of you know, may you be convicted of the need of a new anointing, of a fresh application to the Son of God for the touch of fire. May ours be the seraph's reverence, with the veiled face, ours his modesty, with the veiled form, ours his balance of one-third obedience to two-thirds of contemplation. Then perhaps our cry may awaken similar results to his, and we shall cry, "Undone."

## II.

NEXT, THE CONVICTION THAT GOD IS NEAR.

It is said the whole earth is full of God's glory. You and I would be prepared to admit that where the glory of God shines in the spray above Niagara, or where the morning tint is seen upon the Matterhorn and the evening glow upon the Jungfrau, or where the sun rises and sets upon the broad bosom of the Atlantic, or where the wake of the ships stirs the phosphorescence of the Mediterranean at night. But to be told that the *whole* earth is full of the glory of God, that startles us.

I know a place in London where a woman in a drunken frenzy put her child upon a hot iron bar; where a man beat to death his little crippled boy whose agonizing cries were heard at night. I should not have thought that the glory of God was there. But the seraphim say the *whole* earth is full of the glory of God. We are reminded of what Elizabeth Barrett Browning says:

> "Earth's crammed with Heaven,
> And every common bush aflame with God,
> But only he that sees takes off his shoes."

One day in London I was sitting in a dark omnibus. A man came in to examine our tickets, and I thought to myself, You will never be able to tell whether they have been punctured aright. As I watched, curious to notice, he touched a little spring on his breast, and in a tiny globe of glass a beautiful glow of electric light shone out. Manifestly the man could see anywhere, because he carried the

light with which he saw. So we must understand that when the heart is full of God, you will find God anywhere and everywhere, as the miner carries the candle in his cap through the dark cavity of the earth, and lights his steps.

Oh, men and women, that is what we may rely on here! It is not I that can do anything, but God, Heaven, Eternity are near. It is not my words that shall achieve the result, but the Spirit of God who is as much in this assembly as He was in the upper room upon the day of Pentecost. In the gentle movement of the trees of the forest, can you not hear the stepping of God's feet? And can you not detect the movement of God's Spirit at this moment upon your hearts? Does not this quiet hush, this eagerness, indicate the presence of the skirts of the Eternal as they fall upon us? The whole earth is full of God—all time, all space—and it is because God is here, because there is as much of the Holy Ghost in this place as ever there was in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, because the forces of God are unexhausted, because the mighty river of God which is full of water is flowing through this place, that you and I are certain of blessing.

I believe that if some people had been in that very upper room itself when the Holy Ghost descended, being purblind, blinded by prejudice and passion and worldliness, they would have heard only a noise, they would have perceived no flame. If they had been with John on Patmos, they might have heard the break of the waves upon the rocks, but they never would have heard the harping of the

angels. On the other hand if Peter or John were sitting where you are now, their faces would be lighted up with supernatural light, and they would say:

"Did you not see? Did you not hear? God is here. The great God has come down from the heavens to bless these people. They have asked for it. They have claimed it. God has promised, and He has come."

"Where two or three are met, I am." The Spirit of God is here and is working amongst us also, as He hath done in other times and places. He first convicts us of a cold heart, of our deep need, and of our utter undoneness, and then He comes Himself and says:

"I am here."

## III.

### THE LAST CONVICTION IS THE ONE NEED OF A PENITENT SINNER.

We read that when Isaiah cried, one of the seraphim immediately went for the live coal.

Now, mark this: the angel was not told to go, but he knew just what to do. The fact is, the angels have gone so often for the live coal that whenever they hear a sinner crying that he is undone, they go for it; they do not need to be told. It is as if a druggist's boy were so in the habit of getting the same medicine for the same symptoms that when the patient comes to the door, he knows just what medicine to seek, without going to the doctor to get advice.

The seraph took the live coal from off the altar, and that stood for blood and fire, the two things we want today. We want blood and fire.

Blood! Can you not hear the hiss of the blood of the lamb as it flows gurgling around that coal? As he takes it up with his tongs of gold and bears it to the prophet's lips, it takes the atoning blood with it. We want that first. I call upon all of you to claim that first—the blood. Nothing else will do. "This is He that came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood." You and I need blood first. Let us then betake ourselves to our compassionate Lord, and seek from Him that forgiveness which He purchased on the cross. Do you want it? Are you quite satisfied? Do you look upon your past with perfect complacency? Is there nothing to regret? Are there no sins to put away?

It is natural to respond that you are undone. Then let us begin by opening our whole nature to Christ, and believe that His blood now cleanseth from all sin. Let us dare to believe that directly we turn to that blood, and claim the forgiveness which is based on it, the whole of our past sin is gone, blotted out, lost to view; and if we remind God about it, He will say:

"My child, you need not tell me about it. I have forgotten it. It is as though it had never been."

Next we need the fire, the live coal.

Christmas Evans tells us in his diary that one Sunday afternoon he was traveling a very lonely road to attend an appointment in a village the other side of the slope, and he was convicted of a cold heart. He says: "I tethered my horse and went to

a sequestered spot, where I walked to and fro in an agony as I reviewed my life. I waited three hours before God, broken with sorrow, until there stole over me a sweet sense of His forgiving love. I received from God a new baptism of the Holy Ghost. As the sun was westering, I went back to the road, found my horse, mounted it, and went to my appointment. On the following day I preached with such new power to a vast concourse of people gathered on the hillside, that a revival broke out that day and spread through the whole principality."

Let us close with that. Convicted of a cold heart. Convicted of a worldly life. Convicted of self-seeking and pride. Convicted of having come short of God's glory. Then forgiveness. Then the baptism of fire and power.

God grant that the live coal, which has never lost its glow since the day of Pentecost, may come to every heart, to every mouth, to every life; and that this day a fire shall begin to burn in every mission, in every Sunday-school, in every church.

## II.

## TOUCH NO UNCLEAN THING.

"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing: go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."—Isa. lii., 11.

These stirring words must refer to the same scene that is described in Ezra viii., which records the return journey of a large party of Jews from Babylon to their own land. The weary seventy years of exile had run their course, Cyrus had given the edict for the restoration of the chosen people to the land of their fathers, and a halt was called beside the great river, to gather up the stragglers, and to prepare the whole expedition for its march across the long expanse of sand which intervenes between the strip of green pasture-land that bordered on the river, and their own Gilead.

Whilst halting there, Ezra sent for a body of priests to accompany their march. He was specially eager to secure their presence, as he was at a loss for the transportation of the sacred vessels of the temple, gold and silver, which had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, but had been restored by Cyrus. It was not permitted that common or ordinary hands should touch or carry these treasured relics of the venerable and holy past; and therefore it was a great relief when, according to the good hand of

God upon them, thirty-eight priests and two hundred and twenty Levites were forthcoming.

At a great convocation, on the eve of their starting, Ezra committed the vessels and other freewill gifts into the hands of these men, saying as he did so: "Ye are holy unto the Lord. The vessels also are holy. Watch ye, and keep them until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites in the chambers of the house of the Lord." Notice the stress he laid on the necessity of holy vessels being cared for by holy men. It was as though he said, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

We need not dwell further on the reverent care with which those selected men bore their sacred charge, or on the invisible escort which accompanied their march, or the joy with which they laid down their charge in the temple, and weighed out their treasures. It is enough that we should learn our own lessons from the stirring exhortation: "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."

To us also, as ministers, officers, and workers in the church of Christ, a sacred charge is given. In the same paragraph in which the Apostle Paul said that he had committed his deposit to God, he charged Timothy to guard God's deposit which had been committed to him. It is as though the Christian worker makes out a complete inventory of all he has and is, and asks the Mighty Savior to see to it; while on his side he receives a sacred treasure from His hands, which he is in turn to keep for his Lord. "That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

Every Christian is entrusted with something to keep and carry through the world for God; the Holy Scriptures, with their divine message; the sacred rest-day, now so terribly invaded and threatened; the conception of the church, with its two institutions of the Lord's Supper and baptism; the doctrines of the evangelical faith; especially the doctrine of the anointing and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Each body may be viewed as a sacred vessel, whilst each life should be accounted as a vessel meet for the master's use. (1 Thess. iv., 3; 2 Tim. II., 21). Each has some vessel entrusted, larger or smaller according to opportunity and ability. And therefore, without straining our text, we may apply it very widely and generally.

Just as those who handle the vessels of the Lord's Supper do so with clean hands and reverent care, in their staid behavior witnessing to their sense of the importance of their charge, so we who are called to public office must needs see that our behavior and character are in harmony with our holy charge. To us must come the perpetual reminder:

"Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord."

The Apostle Paul appears to quote the same verse, when he says, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." Having therefore such promises, let us cleanse ourselves.

Let us examine ourselves in the light of our sacred charge.

In order to acquire fitness for bearing the name of Jesus through the world, we must be *separate from evil habits.*

The perpetual cry of the Epistles is that we should put off the old man, which always stands for the habits of our former life. "Put away, as concerning *your former manner of life*, the old man, which waxeth corrupt." "Putting away all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." "Put away all these; anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth." "Let us cast off the works of darkness, revelling and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and jealousy. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

God will certainly show us any habit of evil which clings to us, as the grave clothes did to Lazarus, even after the Lord had given him life. And when, in the growing light, we are definitely shown that some evil thing is grieving Him, we must at once and absolutely put it off, and have done with it. He who bids us, will enable, and take away the very desire, and absolutely set us free.

We must be *separate from inordinate appetite.* The appetites have been implanted for wise and beneficent purposes, but they may be abused, either by being directed to wrong objects, or in an inordinate degree toward right ones. But we must restrict them. The stream must flow in the divinely assigned bed. We must always have the girded loin, and be sober. At our meals, and in our taking of ease and rest, as in all other respects, we must do all to the glory of God, and in the name (or nature) of Jesus Christ. The holy Brainerd said, "I felt no disposition to eat or drink for the sake of

the pleasure of it, but only to support my nature, and fit me for divine service."

We must be *separate from worldly alliances.*

The business man must separate from his partners if they are perpetually violating the law of God, and offending against his sense of integrity and honesty. The Christian girl must refuse the offer of marriage of a man who is not regenerate; and the Christian man must marry only in the Lord. (1 Cor. vii., 39). "For what communion hath light with darkness? Be not therefore unequally yoked with unbelievers." (2 Cor. vi., 14, 15).

We must be *separate from worldy aims and ambitions.*

How many of us, who are engaged in the Lord's holy service, are secretly cherishing some proud purpose of excelling other men, of making a name, of securing money and applause! We will use the pulpit as a pedestal for the adulation of the world, and the cross for a post on which to hang garlands to our own glory. How often do we preach sermons, or make addresses, and attend meetings, with no other thought than to secure the recognition and goodwill of those with whom we desire to stand well! We are not willing to trust our reputation with Christ, or to be called fools for His sake. We are not willing, like the French soldiers under the first Napoleon, to be in the ditch and be trampled under feet, so long as the master rides on in triumph. But all this must be laid aside. We must have no private purposes to serve.

We must be *separate from worldly pleasures.*

There are some of these which are specially asso-

ciated with the world and its fashion; and the command which bids us abstain from every *form* of evil demands that we should keep clear of all that might *justly* be misinterpreted as savoring of conformity to the world. The world will have its card-parties, its balls, its masques, its theatres and operas, its fancy-fairs. We do not here condemn it—it knows no better. It seeks to festoon with flowers the way to destruction, and to enliven its unsatisfied heart with mirth. But we do say that if those who are privileged to carry the vessels of Christ's holy gospel want such things, they should first surrender their sacred charge. It is not fair to endeavor to continue the diversions of the camp of darkness with the commission of the Prince of Light.

We must be *separate from the emotional religious life which is always seeking for signs and manifestations.*

This is a greater evil than appears at first sight. Many of God's professing children confound the Christian life with an hysterical sensationalism and a large amount of emotional and noisy manifestation. This is not the best way of serving God, or of growing in grace and in the knowledge of God. To be always on the outlook for signs and dreams, for voices and visions, for strong emotional responses, and for an ecstatic state of rapture, is not the best. And we do well to separate ourselves from such a condition, so that we may *live in the will*, ever answering with a glad Amen to the least indication of the holy will of God.

The emotional manifestations which too many substitute for a deep religious life are like the yeast,

which Jews must cleanse from their houses before the Passover. A pious person was once asked if she enjoyed herself. She replied that she could not speak positively for herself, as she was not accustomed to dwell on the workings of her own nature, *but she enjoyed God.*

We must be *separate from the activities of our corrupt nature.*

We are so fussy, so eager to serve God after our own style, so prone to take up anything which another has done successfully, without staying to ask whether it is God's will for ourselves. We work so much for God, instead of waiting for Him to work through us. We do not wait for the pattern to be shown us from the Mount. One of God's most honored teachers tells us that we ought perpetually to sink into Christ's grave, to claim the silence of Christ's grave, to die to the activities of our own nature, even when they are exerted in a right direction and for a holy purpose, to allow God to winnow away the chaff before we attempt to sow the wheat.

From all such things we must cleanse ourselves. There is a defilement of the spirit as well as of the flesh. There are weights as well as sins. There are things which are not expedient, as well as those which are positively unlawful and wrong. From all we must be separate and clean.

You may say that you have tried to separate yourself, but in vain, the evil clings to you like a shadow. Then fall back on the philosophy of the will. Be willing to be clean. Be willing to be made willing. Then say to Christ: "I am eager to have my leprosy cleansed; if Thou wilt, Thou canst

make me clean"; and immediately He will stretch forth His hand and touch you, saying, "I will, be thou clean." And you will be delivered.

But do not suppose that you are always to be looking on this side of your life, on the renunciations, the excisions, the amputations. Present yourself to Jesus, as those who are alive from the dead and constrained by His mercies.

*You are His, because He made you.* "It is He that hath made us, and His we are." Surely the builder of a house has a right to the product of His own labor.

*You are His, because He redeemed you.* Ye were redeemed with precious blood, and are not your own, but His by purchase.

*You are His, because God the Father has given Him all who come to Him.* And if you have come to Him, you are assuredly His, though you have not avowed yourself so. (John vi., 37).

Will you not, therefore, present yourself to Him, that He may forgive all your sins, and cleanse you from all that is unholy and inconsistent, and fill you with His sacred fulness? See, He waits to receive you, with such blessings in His hands as will enrich you for evermore. Come now to the altar. Be bound there as a willing sacrifice. Then, as His holy priest, bear His sacred vessels through the world. But, whatever you do, resign your commission and charge rather than disgrace them by aught unworthy of your master and His cause.

## III.

## A VISION OF THE NEW LIFE.

"Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient into the heavenly vision."—Acts xxvi., 19.

You might think that that vision was the face of Christ; a deeper insight will lead you to see that it was the vision of a new life that suddenly dawned upon the heart of Paul. He had been living a low level life, serving his proud self, and antagonistic to Christ. Suddenly, like the new Jerusalem that came down out of heaven from God, there came to him the vision of a life which was within his reach. It beckoned him, and though that life meant suffering, obloquy, persecution, prisons, stripes, death, he followed it, swerving neither right nor left by a hair's breadth, until at last he said:

"I have finished my course."

The first conception of that heavenly vision came to him as he looked upon the face of Stephen, illumined with the light of God. From the moment when he saw Stephen die, the humble slave of Christ, the conception followed him that he too might live a life like that, and die such a death. But he put it away, as you and I put away some of God's fairest visions.

But God loved Paul too much to let him miss that blessed life, and in His mercy pursued him by a goad, and when Paul backed, and said, "I can't do it," he

backed right upon God's goad, and God urged him forward. Still he kicked, and then, since pain would not do it, God painted upon the cloud that hid his future, a vision of a life so fair, so blessed, so radiant, so triumphant, that what the goad could not do the vision accomplished. What the force failed to do, the beckoning of that sweet ideal wrought, and he said:

"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

Though my hand is only an apprentice's hand, and trembles, I should like God to use it to paint before you a vision of the real life, the Christ-life that lies within the reach of every regenerate man. Oh, that I could paint it! I believe that then you would leap to it, and say:

"Ah, when I caught a glimpse of the blessed life I might lead, I who have been such a failure, such a stumbling-block, I who have brought so much shame upon those that loved Christ, then I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I took the first step, and the next, and the next, and life has begun to be one long summer day."

When a heavy morning mist veils the valley and hills, I feel as if half my world was blotted out. But suddenly there comes a breath, or the sun's rays, and the mist parts, and the landscape stands unveiled. So God often parts the mist that hides the future, and shows what a man may be.

I urge young people especially to seek from God the vision of what your life may be, and then obey it, because when you catch God's vision you will always find Him responsible for the outworking of His plan. I often meet men worried about money

matters, and carrying a heavy weight, and I think, Ten to one that man has lost sight of the vision, because when God gives the plan He always finds the stuff, and when God beckons you forward, He is always responsible for the transport.

If you should come to a place where roads meet, and you do not know which way to take, stand still until you get the heavenly vision, and then follow, come what may.

What is this life—the real life that anyone may live henceforth?

In the first place, *it is a life of freedom;* we are set free from the curse of the self-life.

We must remember this true life is not an unnatural life. I know men who talk of holiness as if it meant that it was wrong to laugh, be bright, engage in manly sports, play the piano, read any book but the Bible, or follow certain pursuits for which we have natural aptitudes. I believe that God in His Word will not contradict the nature which He has given, and that which is wrong in us is not our natural aptitudes, but the self-life, around which those aptitudes revolve. The life of which I speak is not a denial of anything which God has imparted, but the transference of these from the pivot of self to the pivot of not-self, which is Jesus Christ, incarnate Love. The man who enters this life is still a bright companion, a manly athlete, still enters into all that home and friendship and life may mean, but everything is hallowed, elevated, ennobled, because revolving evermore around the will of Jesus Christ.

Look at a child. He has smallpox or fever, but

the mother loves him as much as before, and her only desire is to rid him of the fever that now fetters the natural working of the body. The body under the dominion of disease is no longer able freely to live the life that God intended, but when once the disease is swept away, nature reasserts itself, and the child begins to laugh and play, and its merry prattle is heard all through the house.

I believe that

GOD WAITS TO DELIVER US

from the cursed power of the self-life that blasts everything, that blasted Paradise first, and will blast your life unless you are set free from it.

This life also is *a life of deliverance from known sin.*

A minister asked me if I taught sinlessness. I replied, "I teach deliverance from the power of known sin, that God saves us up to our light"; but our light resembles the growing twilight that precedes the day, and therefore there may be many things in which we hourly offend, and which are sinful in God's most holy sight, and at the end of every day, though we have lived up to our light, and have been kept from known sin, we still need to pray, "Forgive me my debts,"—things in which I have failed, in which there has been an incompleteness that must always attach to our poor human nature.

Mr. Spurgeon said of a certain man, "I always thought Mr. —— sinless until he said he was." When a man's face really shines like Moses', he wists it not. There is always the presence of a sinful nature, there is always the not-doing what we

ought, even where we are kept from doing what we ought not. But we may be kept day by day

UP TO THE LIMIT OF THE LIGHT,

and this blessed deliverance from known sin is within the reach of all.

Thirdly: This a life in which *we are kept in time of temptation*

You will be tempted to the end of your life, and the nearer you live to Christ the more you will be tempted. It was after Jesus had seen the open heaven that He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and the man that stands under the open heaven and sees the heavenly vision, is the man whom the devil will tempt to the uttermost. God will permit it because temptation does for us what the storms do for the oaks,—it roots us; and what the fire does for the painting on porcelain,—it makes us permanent. You never know that you have a grip on Christ, or that He has a grip on you so well as when the devil is using all his force to attract you from Him; then you feel the pull of Christ's right hand.

As long as the soldier slinks outside the battle, he carries a whole skin, but let him plunge in and follow the captain, and he will soon have the bullets flying about him. Some of you have had a good time, because there was no use in the devil wasting powder and shot upon you; you haven't been doing him any harm; but directly you begin to wake up and set to work for God, the devil will set a thousand evils to worrying you, or he may come himself to see to you.

This life is also one in which you become *conscious of new power.*

Men often take up new lines of truth because they hope that somehow they will be able to reach and touch large numbers of their fellows. It is like a man who has been fishing all day with a certain bait in vain, but he suddenly changes it, in the hope that the new bait will yet redeem the wasted day. Now in my judgment it is not these new views you want, but it is new power in presenting the old ones, and in this new life it is perfectly wonderful how new power begins to

SWEEP THROUGH A MAN'S LIFE.

Up to a certain point in my own life I sought to influence men by mental conceptions, polished sentences, and vivid and striking metaphors; I found it did not keep them. But when I began to try humbly to realize the heavenly vision, I laid my whole being open to the torrent of God's power, which is always seeking to reach men, and suddenly to my surprise I found that God was pouring through my life river after river, and this began to be realized, "He that believeth on Me, out of him shall flow rivers." Oh, how I welcomed that text! I said:

"Lord, from today I am not going to dam up the water, but I am going to be a channel through which the royal power of God Himself may reach men and women."

O brother ministers, every one of you may suddenly find your power in your pulpit augmented a thousandfold!

Hudson Taylor once said, "I used to ask God if

He would come and help me; then I asked God if I might come and help Him; then I ended by asking God to do His own work through me."

There is this further thought: *This is a life of rest.*

A man said to me, "Aren't you teaching quietism?"

I do not know much about quietism; I suppose it is being quiet; but the man who has hold of these principles is the man who is quiet about himself, but unquiet about everybody else. You are quiet from anxiety, from fever and haste and hurry. In the midst of the storm your pulse beats quietly, and amid a panic which convulses the whole stock exchange you are kept perfectly still. But he who has left anxiety about his own life begins to care about the lives of all around him.

See, there is a boat upset, in which there is a good swimmer. He is perfectly at rest about himself. There is a man with a life-buoy around him; he, too, is at rest about himself. But that man who can swim begins at once to do his utmost to rescue the drowning men around him, and he who is within the life-belt is glad enough to reach out his hands on either side for others to grasp.

If you want to live

A LIFE OF ALTRUISM

—living for others—you would best leave all anxiety about yourself in the hands of Christ.

Two painters were set to paint a picture of rest, and one painted a placid pool in which the mountains were reflected, an utter solitude. The other depicted a living cataract, and over it the bough of a tree on which a nest was securely fixed, and a bird

was brooding over her young. That picture of the bird at rest in the midst of the foam and rushing of the cataract is the truest conception of rest. There is a life in the will of God, so quiet, so at peace with Him, so at rest in His joy, so perfectly content that He is doing best, that the lines are wiped out of the face, the fever is gone from the restless eye, and the whole nature is still. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," and then spend the strength that other men waste in fussy anxiety in helping your fellow men.

The life of which I speak is *a life of taking in.*

Many think it is only a giving up. I do not deny that there is a giving up in it, but it is not without the hope of taking; you see something better, and in reaching for that you drop the worse.

Upon the placid waters of a lake everything which is highest in reality is lowest in the reflection. The higher the trees, the lower their shadow. That is a picture of this world: what is highest in this world is lowest in the other, and what is highest in that world is lowest in this. Gold is on top here; they pave the streets with it there. To serve is looked upon as ignoble here; there those that serve reign, and the last are first.

I never saw a girl unwilling to fling away paste diamonds when she could have real stones, and when a man understands what God can be to the soul, he is independent of things he used to care for most.

O friends, no words can tell what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived of the things which God hath prepared for them that

love Him. I cannot do it, I do not believe any man can; but there beckons you a life of deliverance from self, of freedom from known sin, of deliverance from the power of the devil, of influence over thousands of men, of rest and peace in the heart, of conscious rightness with God, independent of mood and feeling, in which the will is one with the will of God; a life so blessed, so transcendent, so radiant, that it is like the life of Paradise.

Do you want it? Are you sick and tired of your present life? Women who spend your time, Christians though you are, in reading trashy novels, and in a round of fashion, when all about you are the tragedies of human life that you do not touch! Men who are simply living to make money! Oh, is anything more miserable conceivable than for a man to be put in the trust of tens of thousands or millions of dollars, and then to be using for himself that wonderful trust? Perhaps the most royal power a man may have is speech, but next to that, in all God's universe there is nothing like the power of money. If a rich man is wise, he will wake up every morning and say, "I am steward of God's wealth, and I must administer it for Him. How can I best expend it?"

I call you all to this life. Take the first step now. God will show you the next, and the next presently. Give yourself to Christ now, take Him to be absolute monarch. Say, "Lord, from now I am thy slave." Satan will say, "Take care"; nevertheless say it, and you will find that Jesus Christ will begin to work through you in a most blessed way.

## IV.

## THE FAIR MITRE.

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

"And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by. And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."—Zechariah iii., 1-7.

I want to talk to you today about that fair mitre. When these words were written, Israel had just come back from captivity, and the whole land was under the process of reconstruction. The people had come back to find their city a mass of blackened ruins; the walls were down, their houses in desolation, and the holy and beautiful house where they had worshipped God in the days of the past was a heap of ashes. They commenced to reconstruct.

The walls sprang up under their deft touch; their houses were rebuilt; the altar was reërected; and the temple rose again upon its site.

But one sad thought came upon all the people: of what use was it to have the holy and beautiful temple if the priesthood were not fit to exercise their office? They were notoriously unfit. Malachi tells us, what Zachariah confirms, that the priests were greedy, avaricious, and corrupt in life, totally unworthy to come into the most holy place, or stand before God.

Whilst they reconstructed the temple, they needed to reconstruct the priesthood, and in the chapter which we have read, we have the account of the reconstruction of the priesthood. Step by step the filthy garments are taken away, the white robe or surplice is donned, and the priest stands again erect before God, complete, with the exception of the white fillet or mitre. And Zachariah was so anxious about it that he cried out, in the anxiety of his soul, "Let them set a fair mitre upon his head."

"So they set a fair mitre upon his head."

If Zachariah was so eager for it, how much more Zachariah's Lord! And when they were so eager in the Old Testament, how much more eager ought we to be in the New, if, as I hope to show you in a moment, the white fair mitre represents the filling, the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I ought to explain for a moment that I am not straining a point in applying this chapter to ourselves, because, though we do not believe in any order of priesthood, we believe that Jesus Christ has constituted every believer a priest unto God. The

power that loosed thee from thy sins, believer, at the same moment constituted thee a priest. (Rev. I., 6.) We need no human priests, because Jesus Christ has assumed the office of High Priest. And just as the stars retire before the coming sunlight swimming into invisibility in the glowing dawn, so do all human priests recede when Jesus steps to the front as our High Priest. At the same time each believer, man or woman, is a priest. We are called upon to offer spiritual sacrifices, to offer ourselves, to offer our money, our time, our gifts, our position and power, so that every day we stand between God and man. We come into God's presence to speak for man, and we come out of God's presence to speak to man for God.

Are you exercising your office? Have you been to that altar lately? Have you offered yourself, spirit, soul, and body, to Christ? Have you recently used the laver to wash your feet? Do you know the daily cleansing which keeps the heart clean? Have you entered into the holy place to offer the incense of intercessory prayer? Have you kindled your daily profession, as the priests kindled the branched candlestick? Do you know what it is to eat the shew-bread which is the priest's alone, the body of Christ? Do you ever enter into the most holy place, and stand there with the blood in your hand, worshipping?

Ah! believer, it is long since you have exercised your priestly office! You must confess that you have not gone to that priestly work, because there was a consciousness of unfitness.

That unfitness must be dealt with. God will not put the fair mitre upon a body clothed with filthy

garments. God is not going to give the holy influence of Pentecost to men and women who are living unclean and inconsistent lives. There must be a putting away of the sins of the flesh, the putting away of everything which is inconsistent with the light of God; and only so, step by step, can you come up to the point where the fair mitre will be put on your brow.

These are the steps I want you to take with me: to consider the filthy garments; the need of fair, rich apparel; the fact that much of your life has been wasted like a brand half burned through; and then the fact that Satan resists you. We must deal with these four things for a moment. I want to bend my strength upon that fair mitre.

## I.

There must be the removal of the filthy garments.

I am not sure that Joshua saw how filthy they were until he came near the angel. The light from the angel's face fell on his garments and revealed their stains. The garment always stands for habit or dress. We are dealing now with our daily habits.

It is remarkable how people change their dress when the sun begins to shine in March and April. We wear shabby things in the winter. We say it does not matter much what we wear; who sees? The light is so obscure. But as the spring breaks we put off the shabby dress and put on the spring attire. So it is when we stand beneath the light that streams from the Sun of Righteousness; we see a great many shabby things in our lives, and

God calls upon us to drop them without discussion or delay.

We do not grow out of them, but we drop them. We do not gradually recede from them, but we put them off. It is remarkable that in Peter's Epistle, Colossians, and Ephesians, the apostles tell us to *put off* suddenly the habit of sin. You will not grow out of your anger, you must put it off. You will not grow out of your envy and jealousy, you must put them off. You will not grow out of your impurity, you must put it off. As when a prisoner comes forth to freedom he puts off the prison-clothes, so you must not wait to grow out of evil things, but must put them off by a distinct and instantaneous act of your will.

I trust that, by the grace and Spirit of God, you will take step by step with me as I proceed. I am not trying merely to explain a thing to you. I am giving you an opportunity of taking up a position; and I want you to ask, in the light of God's Spirit, if there is any habit of thought or life, or any habitual indulgence in which you are condemned, which always arises before you at a holy time, such as the Lord's Supper, in private prayer, or in the chamber of sickness; and if at this minute any such thing is revealed to you, I bid you *put it off*.

Have you ever studied the life of the evergreen? All through the dark winter it retains its dead, dull leaves; they are better than nothing. But just so soon as the new shoot of spring comes, it presses off the old leaves, and they drop away to be replaced by the new.

So in your heart today there is a shoot of new

Christ-life, which is pressing against the old leaves, the old habits, the old methods of life. Let them drop off! Shed these old leaves just now! Go out of this place leaving the grave clothes behind you. Do you think that Martha and Mary expected Lazarus to grow out of his grave clothes? They would have been greatly astonished if he had tried to do so. Supposing he had said: "I shall drop them presently, you will excuse me now," would they not have shrank even from the brother whom they devotedly loved?

II.

Having put off the filthy garments, have you donned the rich apparel? There must be a positive, as well as a negative. You must *put on* the Lord Jesus. Indeed you put off best when you put on.

You remember the story of St. Augustine. After he was converted and had a little faith, he tells us that an evil woman, with whom he had sinned before his conversion, still clung to him, and made him stumble and fall. He was trying to live for God, with the new robes on, and yet to retain some of the grave clothes too. This brought him into great agony.

One afternoon he was with his friend Alypus in the garden at Tagaste, when a voice seemed to say to him:

"*Tolle et lege*, take and read."

He thought that meant that he was to take up the new Testament and read it, and as he took it in his hands it opened at the closing verse of Romans xiii.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not

provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." It struck him as God's message—"put ye on the Lord Jesus"—and he sent to his friend Alypus, pointed to the text, and told him he was troubled, and they went and told his mother, Monica. The result was that he put on the perfect chastity of Christ, became saint and Bishop of Hippo. The evil habit dropped off him, and everybody recognized the Christ in St. Augustine.

III.

But now there comes another point. Whilst Joshua stood there, Satan was resisting him.

Directly you get a great blessing, the devil is sure to tempt you and to resist you.

When I was a boy, my school-fellows never broke into an orchard when the apples were sour, but always when they were ripe and juicy; and you might know that a certain orchard contained good fruit by the raids the boys made on it. Whenever you are acrid and sour, and haven't much sun in you, the devil will not worry you; there is nothing in you worth his attack. But just so soon as you have been in the summering of Christ's love and got ripe, you will suffer being tempted day and night; there will be

SOMETHING WORTH THE STEALING.

The nearer you get to Christ the more you will have to do with temptation. The closer you get into the heart of the fight the more the devil will torment you. People are sometimes heard to say, "I think I must be going back in Christian life, I am so tempted." But the virulence of the tempta-

tion means, not that you are declining into sin, but that you are advancing in holiness; that the devil is afraid of you; that as he cannot get at Christ directly, he desires to wound Christ by hurting you.

Think how Satan accuses believers! When they sing he says, "Christ, dost Thou hear those people sing? Is that all the love they have? See how they express it with such icy songs!" When they were in prayer, may he not have truly said, "Look at those professing Christians! Is that the best prayer they can offer, with their wandering and wayward thoughts?" And do you not think he says of many a preacher, "Is that Thy chosen messenger? Canst Thou not find one purer in motive and fitter in heart and life than he?"

But whatever the devil says against believers is a greater argument with Christ for helping them. He takes everything the devil says and turns it into a reason for doing more for them than ever. The devil says:

"That man is only a piece of smoking brand, nearly burnt through. He is an old man now who has wasted his life. He may as well be cast back into the fire. There is so little sound wood left."

But Christ replies: "Though there is only a square inch of sound wood, it is the more necessary why I should make the most of what is left."

Satan says again: "Look at that man! He is a broken reed. He has been trampled under foot until he is out of shape. He is not worth Thy care, Son of God. Let him drift away down stream."

But Christ replies: "I know he is a piece of broken reed; but that is the more reason why I

should take him, and with my creative hand make a flute or organ pipe from which to get sweet music in the great orchestra of my church."

The devil says: "Look at that woman, as fitful as a piece of smoking flax! Look at the spark as it goes and comes, and comes and goes again! Blow on it! Trample it out! It is not worth Thine attention."

But Christ replies: "Because her life is so fitful is why I take that spark and breathe on it until it becomes a flame."

Everything Satan says against you is an argument why Christ should love you the more. Having gone to a physician for a sick friend, as you walk along with the physician you tell him how ill your friend is, and enumerate his sad symptoms; everything you tell the physician about the illness of your friend is only another argument why he should hurry to the sufferer's side. Let your life be the most woebegone, the most tempted, the fullest of failure of any person in His church—you are the one that will probably get more help from God than any one besides.

I saw something like this once. There was a blacksmith, one blow of whose hand would fell the strongest antagonist in his neighborhood—a strong, broad-shouldered, glorious man. He came home where his little child was ill. She held out her trembling, thin hands to him, and dragged down his big head to her low level as she lay on the cot. Then I saw that what strength cannot do, weakness can; what the strongest man in the neighborhood could not do, the little child did; she could bring her father to the dust. So your weakness must drag

Christ down to your very uttermost need. The weak man can do anything he likes with Christ, who came to seek and save that which was lost.

It is the sheep away on the wild that brings the shepherd in search; it is the lost piece of money that leads the woman to sweep the house; it is the prodigal that gets the fatted calf.

Suppose I have been writing letters all the morning, and my desk is covered with envelopes and papers. Amongst the mail there came in a five dollar bill. At lunch time I called the servant and said:

"Take these down and put them in the open kitchen fire; I do not want anybody to read them; destroy the papers."

She takes them away in a basket, descends the kitchen stairs, toward the open fire. When she has gone I begin to look about for that bill, but cannot find it anywhere. I suddenly fear that I must have included it among those letters, and hasten toward the kitchen calling to the servant:

"Have you put those letters on the fire?"

"I have just done so, sir."

I rush to the fire, and there I see that bill just shriveling beneath the tongue of flame. I snatch it out. It is burning rapidly. I blow out the flame. I have got only a little charred heap in my hand.

Some one says to me:

"You may as well put that back. It is not worth your keeping."

I say: "I know better. There is the number of the bill, and if I take that to the bank I can get a new bill for it. That piece of charred bill is worth keeping. It will lead to the replacing of the whole."

You have wasted your life. You have been living in worldly society—card-playing, fashion, billiard table, saloons. There is not much left of you. But Christ is careful of what is left, and He will give you new life for the lost one. He will restore to you the years destroyed by the canker-worm, and the palmer-worm; and give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.

"The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" The Lord quotes His choice, which was of God against all Satan's insinuations and attacks.

Yes, God chose you to be a fair and beautiful image of Christ; but you have sadly thwarted and disappointed Him. His choice is not altered. He loves still, and as a shepherd He follows yet. Though your life is eaten through as with fire, He *can* give you new life, and He *will.*

## IV.

Now Zachariah broke in: "Finish it! Put a fair mitre on his head."

I remember quite well one Sunday night at the Metropolitan Tabernacle when Mr. Spurgeon had spoken with more than his usual fire, a man away up in the gallery shouted, in the middle of the most impressive passage, "Hallelujah!" Everybody started.

Mr. Spurgeon looked up and said, "Dear brother, your heart is very full, but you must keep it in. We are not accustomed to that sort of thing here."

It seems to me that Zachariah's heart was so very

full he could not keep it in. He had been watching all the time the transformation of the high priest, and everything was there except the mitre, so he broke in and said: "I say, let them finish the work. Put the fair mitre on his head." And the Lord stooped over Joshua and did as Zachariah suggested.

I think you have put off sin, and put on Christ. We have now come to the crown of all; and nothing remains but to say: "Let them put a fair mitre upon our heads; let us receive the filling and anointing of Pentecost."

About that blessing, Andrew Murray says there are seven steps:

1. *There is such a blessing to be had.* There is a distinct work of the Spirit over and above that of regeneration. It was given at Pentecost, and is forever in the Church.

2. *It is for me.* There is no doubt about that, because Peter said in his sermon, "The promise is to you, Jews, and to your children"—Jews again—"to all that are afar off"—Gentiles—"even as many as the Lord our God shall call." If God has called you, the promise is for you, though up to now you have not gone for it. You are like a man whose father has left him a legacy, but either he does not know of it, or does not go for it. Yet it awaits you.

3. *I haven't got it.* In dealing with the unregenerate, you must convince them they are out of Christ before they will step into Him. In dealing with yourselves, you must be convinced that you are outside the blessing before you will step into it. Have you received the anointing of the Holy Spirit? If you have no assurance of forgiveness; if Jesus is

not a living, bright reality; if you have not power in service; if you have not enjoyment in the word of God and in prayer, you certainly have not the blessed anointing of the Spirit, as a fair mitre.

4. *I am very hungry for it.* God is not going to give His best gifts to those who do not much care whether they have them or not. "I am very hungry for it"; have you got to that? Can you say, "I want my mitre badly"?

5. *I am prepared to give up anything that clashes with it.* The price is a renunciation of whatever is inconsistent with the gift of Pentecost.

6. *I do now yield myself to God that I may receive it.* Have we all reached this?

7. *By faith I do now receive it.*

Those are the seven steps: there is such a blessing; it is for me; I haven't got it; I am very hungry for it; I am prepared to give up anything that clashes with it; I yield myself to God now; by faith I take it, and I reckon I receive it as I go along. I have known people who have reckoned for a week or a month, and then the joy has come, and there has been a new consciousness of power.

We need to pray for one another, and especially for our ministers, that God would give the fair mitre of the Holy Spirit to crown His work in sanctification. Nothing less than this should content us for ourselves, or others. And if this is given, God will also add that if we keep in His ways and do His will, He will allow us to keep His courts, and give us a place of access among those who stand before Him, as His immediate circle and court.

Let them set a fair mitre on his head and mine.

## V.

## THE POWER OF APPROPRIATION.

Let me read from the third chapter of the Book of Acts:

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

"And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple: who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

"And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

"And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

"And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had

made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

Imagine a double staircase of marble, rising to the first terrace for the women, the second terrace for the men. On the top stair of the second flight is the Beautiful Gate, so termed, made of Corinthian brass, so heavy that it took four men to open and close it at sunrise and sunset. It was exquisitely wrought of beaten work, and was counted one of the wonders of the world. Beyond it lay the altar, and the laver, and the temple, the court in which our Savior often walked, and in which the priests did their wonted work. There it stood, not unlike the gate into a whole life, because there was an old law in the book of Leviticus which enacted that any man that had a defect or deformity, though actually born with true Israelitish blood in his veins, was never to enter. He might go right up to that top stair, but there he must stop. No deformed or defective man might pass that limit. I think we may therefore take it now as being the gate into perfect soundness of life.

The man on whom our thought is to be concentrated was born lame. So far as I understand the narrative there was no malformation of the limb,

but simply paralysis of the motor nerve. His ankle bones were perfectly formed. The hinge would work with perfect accuracy. The will might influence the nerve centers, and they might send an impulse through the spinal cord to the ankle bones, but what ever the impulse might be in the will, there was a paralysis which prevented it from being executed. And therefore four friends of his, kindly, honest-hearted men, made a point of coming for him in his humble dwelling-place every morning, to bear him up the double staircase, depositing him upon the highest stair; and then retiring to their avocations, returning to fetch him back at sunset with his scrip more or less full of the alms he had received.

Whether or not he was married we do not know. If he were, he would probably have a good deal to say to his wife and neighbors of what had transpired in the Temple that day. If anything should have happened in the temple courts, if there had been a riot or anything of the kind, or a new anthem in the Levite choirs, he would tell of it. If there had been an undue concourse of people he would speak of it. He was greatly interested in all that went on in the Temple. He lived upon the crumbs that fell there. His sustenance was derived from people who went to and fro, and dropped a pittance in his hand as they passed. He would have liked to have gone in himself, but he never could. He had not the power to do what he wished. He knew the way, but he could not do it.

Is not this a picture of yourself? Right against you stands the portal into soundness of life, where

men may come to the altar of God with exceeding joy, and wash in the laver, and kindle the flame of the seven-branched candlestick, and worship within the vail. That is the perfect soundness of life where men leap and praise God, the ideal on which their mind is set, where there is power to serve God, to live for Him, and to become a whole burnt sacrifice. It is the gate of perfect faith, but you lie just outside, as near as ever you can, but there you stop. You are very glad to live on the alms of the people who go in, the little books they write, the addresses they deliver. It is a pity you do not go in, and get the best God has for you.

But you say, "That will never come to me. I am glad to hear what others have found out about God."

There is not the slightest reason in the world why today you should not know and enjoy as much of God's love as anyone else. The only lack is that somewhere in your nature there is a paralysis, a want of power. The good you would you do not, and the evil you would not you do. All you have to do today, in the simplest way possible, is to link your nature to that of Christ, the living, risen Lord.

Let us follow

THE STEPS THAT PETER TOOK,

so that you may leap up and praise God, and go home never to be paralysed again.

First, *He excited this man's expectation.* He said, "Look on us."

He did look on them, and at first sight he was very much disappointed. As he reckoned them from

head to foot he thought they were about as poorly dressed men as he had seen for a long time. Their costume indicated they came from Galilee, where people were mostly poor, and he thought to himself:

"I shall not derive much assistance from you."

Peter knew from the look of disappointment that passed over his face what his thought was, and said:

"I have neither silver nor gold."

When you are doing work for God with the souls of men you do not want the silver of eloquence, nor the gold of learning, because you have something better to give. So Peter turned the man's expectation from himself.

If I were to try and appeal to your intellect or emotions you might begin to depend upon the Christian men with whom I associate, or upon their books. As you did so they would intervene between you and the only thing that does abide and really help, and that is, the touch of the human spirit with the mediator in whom God dwells, and who is waiting to give Himself to you. He will go with you through the street. When you reach your lonely bedroom He will be there. When you awake tomorrow morning your first thought will be, He whom I found yesterday is present. You will no longer rely on the impulse of a human voice, which soon fades away upon the night wind, but you shall go in the strength of a nature which will always be yours, poured into your life, empowering and energizing you, from Jesus Christ.

So the first step is to turn people's thoughts away from the speaker.

Secondly, *Peter began to talk about his Master.*

And he did that wisely. If he had begun by talking about the man's faith, the man would have looked at his faith. About the worst thing anybody can do is to talk about faith to people who do not believe. Whenever a minister talks about faith, his hearers begin to wonder if they have the right sort. The more you feel your pulse, the more you disturb your heart's pulsations. The more you think if you are well, the more morbid you become. If you want people to believe do not talk about faith, talk about

THE OBJECT OF FAITH,

and remove any moral hindrance to faith that there may be in the nature; because faith is not intellectual but moral, and unbelief is the result generally of some moral inaptitude, some delinquency, some sin that needs to be dealt with. When you have dealt with that and presented Christ, faith rises sweetly toward Him.

Do not tell people to examine their faith, but lift up Christ. This is what Peter did. Only Christ! He held Him up before the man.

You will further notice—and this is a very important thing—he did not hold up facts about Christ, but *Christ Himself.* Men are saved, not by the death of Christ (though it is often said so), but through faith in Him who died. They are not saved by the resurrection of Christ, but by Him who rose. Men tell me to go back to Christ. What is the use of going back eighteen hundred years? They tell me to go up to Christ. What is the use of going

up? He is here, actually present, the same yesterday, today, and forever. I hear Him say:

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive, and with you to the end of the age."

Men always think that heaven touches earth at the horizon, either at the east or west, and that the heaven about them is far away. But heaven is as near earth here and now, as at the horizon either of the long past or of the far future. Christ is here. He is moving amongst us. and we point you to the present Christ.

And Peter went further. He did not talk about Christ as a teacher, or miracle-worker, or perfect human example. He said, "He who died is glorified."

What is glory? Glory is the breaking out and the manifestation of hidden quality. What is the glory of light? The rainbow, because it reveals the hidden beauty and color of light. What is the glory of a seed? The flower, for the flower unfolds the aroma and beauty that lie folded in the seed. When is the beauty of the diamond seen, but when its facets are cut to reflect the light? And so what is the glory of Christ? That through death His true nature was revealed and set free, so that the nature of Jesus might permeate other natures. If the nature of Christ can pass freely into the nature of men they must become perfectly sound. In the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, it has become possible for the nature of Christ to be all-pervasive. Therefore Peter began wisely enough to speak of that, and say:

"God hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ye crucified."

Then Peter went on to utter one more thought. He spoke of Christ as the Leader of life. He used a word which is used only four times in the Bible, the meaning of which is, *the leader of a file of men.* If I had a hundred men here and put the representative man first, you would see in him a specimen of the ninety-nine behind him. He would be the file leader. Look at him, and understand the rest.

Peter said, "My Master is the leader of the file, the file-leader of life."

It is a marvelous expression. The old version says, "the Prince of Life"; the revised version says, "the Author of life"; but the Greek says, "the file-leader of life." Peter says in effect: "He does not lead cripples, He does not lead lame men, He does not lead a lot of decrepits that go on crutches; He leads a file of life. If you will fall in and follow, you will find that you will become as one of the file of living ones."

Is not that a grand conception? It is as if when Christ rose from the dead He began to march, and Peter and John and Mary marched after, and the early church followed, and the martyrs fell in line, and all the holy ones that confessed Christ in the dark ages joined the file, and they are marching on today.

I HEAR THEIR STEADY TRAMP

through all the ages

All who fall in behind Christ find Him the file-leader of life, perfect life. Fall in, lame man, and walk!

Oh, brothers and sisters, you and I are following after many who have gone through the beautiful gate where Jesus has gone before us. He is marching on into the everlasting glory, deeper and deeper into the heart of heaven, to the fountains of waters of life. He is leading, and we are following, and shall follow for evermore. He is the file-leader of living ones. Peter struck a spark when he said that.

But the man did not get up yet. He said, "I cannot."

"Well," said Peter, "He is the Author of life. His nature (that is, His name), through faith in His name, will make you strong." Whenever in the Bible you encounter the word *name*, substitute *nature;* name is always nature. Peter said, "Man, your nature is paralyzed but His nature is strong. If, then, you can get His nature into you, especially to that part of your ankle bones which is paralyzed, He will make you strong just where you are weak."

Is not that what *you* want? You want His nature where your nature is weak. You want Him to replace your paralysis by His strength. He is strong enough. His feet glow like coals of fire.

The man began to think about it. "Yes," said he, in a flash, "if only His nature where it is strong, would come into my nature where it is weak, my ankle bones would receive strength. That is it."

And the man received out of Christ by an act of faith the quality in which he was weak; or I might put it in this way, he took Christ's nature to be that quality in him in which he was deficient.

Now there is not one true believer on Christ that is not conscious of weakness. It is not that your judgment is wrong, or your knowledge of right and wrong defective, but you are paralyzed through some weakness of your moral nature, so that you cannot do what you would. This, however, shall be remedied, if from this lesson you learn how to appropriate the fulness of Christ.

It was a revelation to me. I was staying with Canon Wilberforce one autumn. We had been for an afternoon walk near Southampton, with quite a number of clergymen and gentlemen, and had come in to an early cup of tea, and then to a twilight talk around the fire. He sat there, and addressing me, asked me to give a brief record of my religious experience. I said that I had lately given up something for Christ. An old clergyman on the other side of the room then got up, the light falling upon his reverend face. He said he was quite surprised to hear me talk about giving up. For his part he was always taking in. He said that formerly, when he was a very impetuous, impulsive man, he was about to lose his temper with a number of children, when suddenly he turned to Christ, and said, "Thy patience, Lord!" and instead of losing his temper he said he could have borne with twice the number of children, and twice the amount of noise, because he had met it by the nature of the risen Christ. He said that ever after that he acquired the habit, whenever the devil tempted him, of taking his cue from the devil, and getting an armful of the opposite grace from Christ. Hence

what the devil meant to be his stumbling block he turned into

A STEPPING-STONE.

I believe that is why God allows us to be tempted, because temptation may become such a means of grace, when we treat it so. In hours of impurity receive Jesus to be purity. In hours of irritability receive Jesus to be quietness, tranquillity. In hours of rush receive Jesus to be rest. In hours of weakness and moral cowardice receive Jesus to be strength.

You begin to understand my text now? His nature, through faith in His nature, makes men strong where they are weak, and their ankle bones receive strength.

Oh, that everybody here would stop one moment and ask, "Where am I weak? Where do I fail?" We all know where. When you have once broken your limb it is always weak at that spot. If a wall has been broken down you can always tell where it has been patched. You and I know where we have failed, failed, failed again.

Perhaps you say, "I am easily ruffled. I shall never get inside the Beautiful Gate."

Yes, but if you can once receive the nature of Christ to take the place of the ruffling, so that when the suggestion of temptation for ruffling comes you meet it, not by your resolution not to be ruffled, but by the peace and gentleness and sweetness of Christ, you will be able to walk, leap, and praise God. Your nature would fall within five minutes. Your resolution would carry you no further than the

rush of an express train will carry a chip or straw which it catches up for a moment as it eddies over it, but it soon drops it down. But if you can once understand what it is to have the nature of Jesus pouring into you moment by moment, as the heat pours into the radiator when the valve is turned on, then you will never get cold and fall again. His nature through faith in His nature makes people strong.

But they must *receive* it. Here and now, without emotion, without feeling, without earnestness, only conscious that you need strength, I want you to draw out of Christ His nature, by an act of appropriating faith.

It carries me back to

CHRISTMAS MORNING

in the "auld lang syne" that will never come again, but the memory of which lingers ever fragrant in my heart like music in the dream—those happy, happy days which yet live on in one's power to understand a child's life. When Christmas morning came, the long-expected morning, the prayers seemed long, and the breakfast was hardly touched when the servant came to announce that all was ready, and father and mother let us helter-skelter in. I can see the table now covered with presents, and the tree in the middle. There was a great heap, and I did not need to *ask* anybody for them, I just *took* them. Off the wrapping paper went, and on to the floor—one walked knee deep in waste paper; and when the paper was gone the presents were appropriated: this was mine and that.

Can you not imagine God lifting the cloth off a great table full of gifts? All is ready. Child, you have been waiting ten years for it, and the day has come, and there is your gift, and yours, and yours.

What do you want? You have been praying for forgiveness. There it is! Now come up, and take it. You have been asking for the assurance of sonship. It is there! Take it. What do you want? Power over passionate thoughts and deliverance from an unholy appetite? Well, the purity of Christ will answer all that. What do *you* want? "I have a terrible temper, sir. I try to be pleasant at home, but when I am most determined I get easily put out, and I am ready to kill myself with remorse. If I could only keep my tongue still!" Well, here it is, the patience of Christ. What do *you* want? You have been asking for five years for the filling of the Holy Ghost. It is all ready, it has been here a long time but you have never come for it. Here it is. What is it *you* want? Strength in your ankle bones? You want to walk in God's way, you want to leap a bit? Well, here it is, all the old, glad strength of earlier days, when you used to leap as the hart. It is here in Jesus Christ. He is the table, He is the gift, He is the cover too. His human nature, set free in death, is now glorified on His Father's throne. Is not that enough for you? The Lord Jesus is the complement of your need.

Let me give you a lesson in mathematics. If I draw an arc of a circle, the rest of the circumference required to make it a complete circle is called the complement. Complement is only an abbreviated form of completement. The bigger the arc the

smaller the complement. Those who want most will get most out of the complement Christ. Christ is the complement of human need, and so blind men took seeing out of Christ, and deaf men took hearing out of Christ, and dead men, (if I may so put it), took life out of Christ, and women who for twelve years had suffered much took virtue out of Christ. Everybody that wanted anything just took what they wanted, and He became the complement of their needs. His nature, through faith in His nature, made blind men see, and deaf men hear, and lame men walk, and dead men live. Everybody took out of Him just what they wanted; and He is here now, and you have only to take out what you need and go home with it, nay, go home with HIM.

Just once more. Peter said, "What I have I give."

I could not make out for a long time what Peter did give. I may be wrong, but it seems to me the only thing he gave, next to his presentation of Christ, was

HAND-HELP.

He took hold of the man and pulled him up, and the moment he did that it was as a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of a similar movement by his Master. What Peter did visibly, Christ did invisibly.

As I try to lift you to faith in Christ, it seems to me that the faith which is by Him will give you perfect soundness in the presence of all the angels. *And then you must act faith.*

Suppose that man, when Peter had spoken to him,

had felt his ankles to determine whether anything had happened to them, do your think he would have been well? Suppose he had put them out to see whether he had any more power in them, do you think he would have been made well? He did not wait, but sprang up; "leaping up, he stood and began to walk." That is, he acted faith. He did not feel well before he commenced to walk, but as he began to walk he felt he could walk. If Peter, on one memorable occasion, had put one foot over the boat's side to see if the water would bear him, he would have got his feet wet, and he would never have walked a step. But Peter went clear over and he walked on the water.

Now, if a man says, "I am going to try this way of living, but I do not *feel* as though I have received anything, I do not *feel* different from what I felt when I came into the church, and therefore I have nothing," that man will not be helped.

I have had in my own life for some time a great besetment. Two or three months ago I said to Christ: "I take Thee for that part of my nature where until now I have always been fearing to fall, that I may be perfectly sound." I was sitting quietly in my room when I made the transfer. It was the quiet act of faith, but all my life has felt the effect of that solemn moment. I have not feared the temptation since then, because I knew that Christ would meet it whenever it presented itself.

Do not only pray to Christ tomorrow morning that He would keep you, but say, "Jesus Christ, I claim from Thee now patience, sweetness, gentle-

ness all day"; then take Him, and dare to believe that when there is any temptation to irritability or pride or passion, you may meet the temptation with the nature of Christ

Years ago, in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, I heard Mr. Spurgeon tell an old story with new power. It was about the ship called the Central America. When the drinking-water had failed and the crew were in great need, they ran up a flag of distress. The flag was answered from another ship.

"What is the matter?" came through the speaking tube.

"Water! Water! we are dying for want of water!"

And the answer came back, "Dip it up then! You are in the mouth of the Amazon."

The mighty Amazon was pouring a flood of fresh water far out to sea. They dipped it up. There was no need to ask further for drinking-water.

Men and women, you are in the estuary of the grace of God. The whole torrent of the Christ-nature that rises in the mountains of Deity is flowing down around your life. Do not go up to the mountains and plead, but dip down the bucket of your faith into Jesus Christ, and take up purity, peace, soundness. Dip it up, dip it up! His nature, through faith in His nature, will make you strong in the presence of all that know you.

May God help you to act now!

## VI.

## TAKE! TAKE! TAKE!

God waits to bless us, and to give us the very same power today as they had in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, but we must learn now to *take* that power. I want to speak, therefore, from the word you shall find in Isaiah xxxiii, beginning with the 20th verse:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us.

"Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided: the lame take the prey."

"The lame take the prey." If lame people can take it, anybody can.

What a remarkable expression! It first struck me in Charles Wesley's noble hymn, perhaps the finest hymn in our mother-tongue, which begins:

"Come, O, thou traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee.
With thee all night I mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day.

In vain thou struggiest to get free;
I never will unloose my hold.
Art Thou the man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold.
Wrestling, I will not let thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know."

The last stanza is as follows:

"Lame as I am, I take the prey;
Sin, fear and death with ease o'ercome;
I shout for joy, pursue my way,
And like a bounding hart fly home,
Through all eternity to prove
Thy nature and Thy name is love."

"Lame as I am, I take the prey." Now it is not like that in ordinary life. Usually when people are lame they miss, they do not take. If a man is lame in arithmetic, and cannot add up a column of figures correctly; if he is lame in his memory, and cannot recall names and faces; if he cannot distinguish between two sorts of fabrics; if he be lame in body or mind, he gets pushed aside in the rush of other men as they press past him and take what is to be had, while he comes in second or third best. But God says lame people come off best with Him. There is therefore

GOOD HOPE FOR YOU AND ME.

I saw something like this once in a farm-house. A basket of apples came in. The large family of children began to help themselves to its contents as soon as it appeared, all but one little lad with a pale face, Jimmy, who stood against the wall, leaning on his crutch. The mother, a bustling woman, came in, saw what the children were doing, and said:

"Now, children, put all those apples back, every one of them."

The children obeyed. Then she said:

"Now, Jimmy, you go and take your pick, my boy."

And Jimmy came on his crutches into the midst of his brothers and sisters, and helped himself to the juiciest of all those apples. I saw then that under the protecting care of the mother's love, as well as under God's love, the lame take the prey.

I remember also how poor Thomas was lame in his faith, and lingered just a week behind the other disciples; but Jesus came all the way from heaven on purpose to show him His hands and His side. Lame Thomas took the prey that day.

There are people who have always been lame. Whenever there was a blessing to be had, they missed it. Whenever the pool of Bethesda was stirred, they got there only in time to see another go forth healed. Whenever there was a revival, some friend of theirs got the blessing, but they lost it.

I want to show you now that those who have been the lamest of the lame may take God's best. We often labor under the impression that God's best gifts are placed so high on the shelf that only those who have become mature and good can reach them, when the fact is that He puts His best gifts on the lowest shelf against the ground, so that we have to bend our stiff backs to get down to them. Today God's very best gifts are waiting to be taken. My heart beats high within me because we may appropriate things which kings and prophets heard but did not see, but which are within the reach of the lamest today.

## I.

But perhaps I ought to explain how Isaiah came to say such a thing, because we never should take the Word of God out of its connection to suit our purpose.

When it was being written, Sennacherib, with two hundred thousand of the fiercest soldiers that ever drew sword, was crossing the frontier of Palestine and making his way to the doomed city of Jerusalem. To use his own words, he thought he would be able to rifle its treasures as easily as a boy might steal eggs from a nest in spring.

You can almost hear in the earlier verses of the 33d chapter of Isaiah the scream of the cypress trees and the sigh of the cedars of Lebanon as they were felled to fill crevasses and make a roadway for the troops. The inhabitants left their homesteads, their vineyards, and their olive-yards, and fled for refuge to the larger towns, whilst all who lived in the neighborhood of Jerusalem crowded into that city. I suppose it would ordinarily hold about twenty thousand people, but at this time probably twice that number were crowded within the walls. Asses and camels were stabled in the streets, household goods were piled up in the courts, and all the steep houses were filled from top to bottom with fugitives. Provisions began to run short, and there was not water enough for supplying their needs.

Everybody waited with anxiety the moment when Sennacherib with his two hundred thousand soldiers should arrive. Hezekiah tried to stop him coming;

he sent a bribe to stay him; but Sennacherib took the gold, ridiculed the king, and still marched on.

One day, when the people woke up and looked out over the walls, they saw the brown tents of Sennacherib's army encompassing them on every side. They could hear the bugle-call, and see the scarlet coats of the Assyrian soldiers. Then men looked at their wives, and vowed they would take their lives with their own hands, rather than let them fall into the hands of those soldiers; and the women looked upon their little babes, and determined to slay with their own hands rather than to see them tossed from spear-point to spear-point to amuse those barbarous invaders. It was an awful condition.

When English soldiers were shut in at Lucknow, with thousands of mutinous Sepoys surrounding them, they knew that England was sending re-enforcements by every steamship. But Jerusalem had no such hope. She knew that if she fell, the people of Egypt and the land of Moab would be only too glad. Her condition seemed hopeless. The one man who kept a level head was Isaiah, and Isaiah said:

"The Lord is responsible. The Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our King. He will save us. He will save us so effectively that though the people of Jerusalem seem as powerless as a lame man, yet shall they get the spoils of yonder tents, so that what seems to be hopeless in our condition today is the very best thing that ever happened. We shall acquire the riches of Sennacherib's soldiers. The lame shall take the prey."

Before we can take the prey, however, we must be quite sure that we have

RUN UP THE ROYAL STANDARD

and taken Jesus Christ to be Savior, King, Judge, and Lawgiver.

I press that upon you, because I know that in my own life—God forgive me!—it was many, many years after my conversion, and several years after I had entered the ministry, before I took Christ to be my Judge, Lawgiver, and King. It was a very memorable night in my life when I knelt before Christ and gave myself definitely to Him, and committed the keys of my heart and life to His hands. Then I knew I was His, and that He was mine; and though I had no joy, no emotion, no ecstasy, I had a blessed feeling in my heart that I had but one Lord, one will, one purpose in all my life and for all coming time—that Jesus was my Judge in doubtful things, my Lawgiver for the remainder of my life, my *King*, my King, my KING, for whom henceforth my life was to be spent.

Have you come to that? If you have never done it before, kneel down alone, and say:

"Jesus Christ, thou hast been my Savior from hell for many years, but now I yield to Thee everything I have. Thou shalt be King. Thy will shall be supreme. No longer shall I do that which is right in mine own eyes."

God help you to begin now! When you have come to that, you will understand how exquisitely God saved His people. who have no King but Him.

## II.

Let me tell the story of their deliverance dramatically, so that you will be more likely to remember it.

We will imagine an occasion when a group of Hezekiah's chief captains were engaged in discussing matters in the royal palace.

One says: "We saw faces of the enemy appear over the wall, and if we had not been there in the nick of time, they would have broken in; but my men hurled them back, with their ladders after them."

"Oh, yes," says another; "but they had a battering ram where we were, and I thought they would have made a breach through the wall."

"Yes," says a third man, "and they were sapping and mining the walls where I was; we were only just able to stop them."

Says a fourth, sagely, "Yes, but I tell you where the mistake was. Our city should not have been built up here on these hills, where we can have no river around us. Thebes has got the Nile, Babylon the Euphrates; but Jerusalem is perched on these hills, with no river to intercept the advance of an enemy or supply our crowded population with water. If ever we get through this siege—I doubt if we ever shall—I shall advise Hezekiah to pitch the city down by Jericho, where we shall at least have a Jordan between us and the foe."

At that moment Isaiah came on the little group and said to the last speaker: "What was that you were saying?"

"I was expressing my opinion, sir, that it is a great pity that we haven't a river to separate us from the foe."

"A river! A river! Never let me hear you talk like that again! A river! We want no river. The glorious Lord is a place of broad rivers and streams. Everything that a river can be to a city, the glorious Lord is to us. If you could see what I see, you would have a vision of our glorious Lord all around the walls of our city, between us and the foe. I tell you that Jerusalem is well encompassed, environed with the presence of the eternal God, the glorious Lord. Here is His place of broad rivers and streams, and you shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, safe and still."

That is it—safe and still! Jesus Christ will be as helpful to you and me. Let me show you how. There are so many of us, like Jerusalem, without a river. Let me picture one case.

Very likely there is a woman here in middle life. Years ago when she was a girl of eighteen, her mother on her dying bed said:

"My daughter, I charge you to take no husband or home until you have seen your younger brothers and sisters settled in life."

She promised she would not. She waited until her lover could wait no more, and saw the boys and girls grow up and secure homes for themselves. Presently the father died. But she has neither husband nor child. Often when she sits in the church and looks around, she sees women who were girls at school with her, who played with her in girlish sports, sitting with their husbands and children.

Her heart sinks, and turns sick. Ah! she has no river of human love and comfort and blessedness. But I tell her:

"The glorious Lord will be to you, my sister, a place of broad rivers and streams. Everything that human love can be to a lonely woman's soul, the glorious Lord will be to you."

Or take the case of some young man whose father died when he was young. He has had no advantages. He has had to work for his widowed mother and the family, and misses sadly the education which is within the reach of so many American youths. He feels, oh! so unfit for much of the world's work. What can he do? Well, he has not got the river, but he must learn that he has God, the glorious Lord.

The same holds true of the church. Some ministers may say:

"My church is a very poor one. The neighborhood is only half settled. It is hard for me to maintain my home life without beggary, and my preaching without books."

Ah, friends, if you would only learn what I am talking about, that it is almost a good thing to be without the advantages that others have, because you can obtain from God a hundred-fold more! It is the weak whose strength God increases. It is those that have no might or wisdom to whom God gives wisdom and righteousness and strength. It is in men like Paul, the weakest of the weak, that He perfects His grace.

Neither men nor women nor circumstances are enough for the soul. Without all these, if you have

God, you may be satisfied. Is not the wild flower satisfied when its roots can reach the Mississippi? Is not the humming-bird satisfied when it has all the myriad rays of the sun? Is not the little child satisfied when it has all the mother's love and mind and soul? Was it not a quiet habitation? Is it not safe? Yes, my friend, in the absence of all else, the glorious Lord is enough.

Many people put their circumstances always in the innermost circle, next their heart, and they put God outside, and look at Him through their wants and circumstances. It is like looking at the sun

THROUGH A LONDON FOG.

There are other people who put God next them, and their circumstances on the hills with Sennacherib. To those who have learned to live trusting in God, their habitations are quiet and safe. Put God between you and everything. Weary, storm-tossed heart, put Jesus between you and the crest of the wave.

The envelope is useful to protect the letter it contains from being soiled or damaged. So when a man lives inside God he is protected, because enveloped. God is his environment, his wall of fire, his river and stream.

They tell me that the regalia of a certain city in Europe are kept, not like that in the Tower of London, with iron bars all around, but on what appears to be an unprotected table. Yet I pity the man who should try to take one jewel from that crown, because a stream of electricity is always being poured around the table, so strong that if a

man dared to touch it with his hand he would draw it back benumbed.

That is the way to live. God is in you and around you. Live in a constant consciousness of the presence of God.

Thus it befell Jerusalem. The glorious Lord was all around, above, within and without; and the result was that one day

> "The Angel of Death laid his wings on the blast,
> And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed."

and the tents of the Assyrians were filled with the dead. Then they threw open the gates, and the people of Jerusalem streamed out, crossed the Kedron valley to the other side, and helped themselves to the spoils. Poor, lame Jerusalem was enriched by the prey.

If there were any lame men inside the city, I think I hear them say: "We may as well have our share." And on their crutches I see them limping down the valley, slowly climbing the further slope going from tent to tent, taking what they would.

Do you know what it is to get spoil out of temptation, to gain out of sorrow, to be enriched by Sennacherib? Do you dread sorrow, temptation, trouble? Oh that you knew what it is to be more than conquerors; not simply to be safe from Sennacherib, but

TO GET SPOIL OUT OF HIS ATTACKS!

I will show you how to do this. When Satan comes to you to tempt you to impurity, turn to Jesus and take anew of His purity. When he tempts you to irritability of temper, turn to Jesus

and take a new armful of His patience. When he tempts you to be cowardly and weak, turn to Jesus and take a new heartful of His courage. As your weakness throws you more upon the help of Jesus Christ and you lean harder upon Him, you turn what the devil meant to be a stumbling-block into a stepping-stone. Oh! life is glorious when you live like that. The loneliness is gone, solitude is gone, the fear of failure is gone, the constant dread of being overcome by temptation is gone; and you have the sense of everything being beneath your feet because you are in the glorious Lord, and realize that Jesus Christ Himself is offering you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Oh glorious riverlessness, that I may know His protection! Oh blessed poverty, that reveals to me His wealth! Oh desirable loneliness, that teaches me the friendship of the Brother Christ! Oh infirmity, and want, and sorrow, we hail you all! Had it not been for sin abounding, we never should have known that His grace abounds over all. The glorious Lord is a place of broad rivers and streams.

## III.

If that be so, we are all come to the position in which we can learn to take. I suppose almost the most important distinction a man can learn to make is that between praying for a thing and taking it. The lame *take* the spoil. It is not said that they pray for it.

Some one may perhaps say: "Well, I am glad I dropped in to hear you. I hope I shall get some

good from your brief stay in our city. I got some help tonight."

I might ask: "In what way did you get help tonight?"

"In this way: I think that henceforth I shall pray more than I have ever prayed."

I must certainly reply: "My friend, it is not a matter of *praying* more, it is that you should *take* more."

There is a whole world of difference between the prayer that supplicates and the faith that receives. There are a great many things in life for which we may claim an answer because they are according to God's will. You do not need to pray to God to do as He has said, but to take what He offers. "The lame *take* the prey." Let us all learn this lesson. Let us know that life is full of God, that there is as much of God here as in the Pentecostal chamber. But it is of no use for us to know this unless we have learned to take. "The lame *take* the prey."

I left my home in Hampstead, and went to live in a suite of chambers near my church in London. At first I much missed my own house on the breezy Hampstead hill, but finally I came to see how many modern conveniences had been adapted to the suite of chambers, and so became more and more content. There is electric light, gas fire, a supply of hot water, and so on—all very convenient. But I have sometimes thought that if I had taken a servant who had been brought up in one of our country-houses in England, where they light the farm-house fire at four or five o'clock in the morning with chips and wood and match, and trim the oil-lamp for light, if

I put her in that flat of mine, and said: "You will find here everything you want; fire, light and hot water; I shall be in again in three or four hours"; I might come in at eleven o'clock and find her sitting there in the middle of the room in total darkness, sobbing out:

"This is the most miserable place I was ever in."

"What is the matter? There is light, there is fire, there is water. Can't you be happy?"

"It is dark and cold and wretched."

Immediately I turn that switch, that key, that tap, and the place is full of light and heat, and the hot water is flowing.

What is the difference between her and me? It is that I know how to use, how to appropriate, how to take, and she does not.

Now that is the whole difference between some of God's children and others. God is the same today as at Pentecost. Christ is the same here as in heaven. There is the same blessed power for the religious life. Some have learned the blessed art of taking it, but others only pray for it. If I can get you, not to *pray* for it, but to begin to *take* it, you will instantly step into a new experience.

There was as much electricity in the days of Alfred as there is today; the only difference is that Edison has taught us how to get the electricity out of cloud and air, sunbeam and earth, and how to yoke it to our chariot. Edison knows how to take, and has taught the lesson to the world.

Oh, I wish I could teach you how to take the Divine electricity into your lives today! It is not by *praying* for it, it is by *taking* it.

Now consider the daily life. You get up in the morning, and when you are living like this you forecast the day. You say: "I am going to have breakfast with people that I dread, and I am so afraid I may lose my temper. Lord, I take grace for the breakfast hour. At ten o'clock I have to meet two or three men to discuss a very difficult problem. Lord, I claim and take wisdom for ten o'clock. At twelve o'clock I may be thrown into society, and greatly tempted to exaggerate, or to backbite, or to libel other people's character. Lord, for twelve o'clock I take the spirit of perfect love." And so you forecast the whole day, and take things from God; moreover you believe that you have what you take. Then you count on God. You do not keep on praying, but you rise from your knees, saying, "I thank Thee, Father. Give me also what Thou seest I need," and you go along your way reckoning on God.

A man said to me, "If you pray like that, don't you pray very short?"

I replied, "Perhaps it does make one more short and businesslike in the supplication part of prayer, but there is so much to thank for, so many answers received, that it more than makes up for what is lost in direct supplication."

You may be weak, sinful, full of failure. You may be at the end of yourself, but you are very near God. Lame Mephibosheth sat at the King's table. And the poor, paralyzed man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple was made perfectly whole.

Now, lame soul, *take*. What do you want from Jesus? Take Him to be that. Take the glorious Lord

to be what you want most. Go home, and as you walk along say:

"Yes, yes, I do take Jesus, my glorious Lord, to be to me a place of broad rivers for protection, and streams to supply my thirst and irrigate my plot. Then I shall have a habitation quiet from anxiety, quiet from restlessnes, quiet from fear. The stakes will never be taken down. Sennacherib will never get inside. My heart will lie on the very heart of God, satisfied and safe."

## VII.

## THE BLAMELESS LIFE.

"Abstain from every form of evil. And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."—1 Thess. v., 23, 24.

"Who also will do it." Will do what? Will present you blameless at the coming of Christ. He also will keep you blameless every day you live, so that you may be blameless and harmless, the child of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and evil world, in which you are called to shine as a bright light. (Phil. II., 15).

There is a world of difference between a *blameless* life and a *faultless* life. We may be kept *blameless* day by day, but we shall not be *faultless* until we are fully perfected in the presence of His glory. But God is able to keep us blameless.

Let me give an explanation of the difference between blamelessness and faultlessness.

We will suppose that a working woman has been all day at work. She goes home at night physically wearied. She has two children, one a little girl, and the other a baby. She rocks the baby to sleep, and takes out some work for her already tired fingers

But presently the work drops from her hand and she falls into a doze, losing herself in sweet unconsciousness. Then her little girl, eager to help her mother, steals up to her side and takes from her fingers the work at which the mother had been engaged, creeps back to her chair and commences to work. But ah, what stitches!

Presently the mother awakes and feels for the work. Where has it gone? Then the little mother's-help runs up and says:

"Mother, look! Look what I have done to help you!"

As the mother examines those childish stitches, she knows that they will all have to come out. The work is far from faultless, but the child is blameless. The child did as well as she knew. Her work, judged by the higher standard of perfect needlework, was a great failure. Yet who could say a word against the child herself?

I can imagine the mother putting that work aside in the drawer and keeping it. Some day when that daughter is herself a woman, with rather high notions about her work, the mother says: "Come here, and look at this!" and she takes her to that drawer and shows her that childish work.

"Oh, mother, whoever did that work? Why, what stitches! How ridiculous!"

"Ah, daughter, you did it yourself!"

"I did it? Weren't you very cross with me?"

"No, my child; I was not cross, because you were blameless; you did as well as you knew."

"Mother, I am ashamed to see it."

Suppose God should take a transcript of the best

day you ever lived on earth, and keep it up in heaven somewhere, and show it to you a thousand years from now. You will find it very far from faultless, and you will say:

"O God, how could you love me when I lived like that?"

But God will say: "It was as good as you knew. You walked with me according to your light; and the blood of Jesus Christ, my Son, cleansed you from your unconscious sin." Let us always make that distinction. I feel that men do many things which are not faultless, but they are blameless, because they know no better. Hence, a man will not do today what he did five years ago; and five years from today he will not do what he does now. Our light grows, and as our light grows, our knowledge grows; and our walk ought to be more in consonance with our knowledge and grace.

"*He will do it.*" I hardly know where to make the emphasis. If I say He *will* do it, there you have the certainty that He will do it. If I lay the emphasis on *He*, I get the certainty that God Himself will do it. I bring that message to every one who is utterly disheartened and discouraged by perpetual failure. Be assured that the great God of heaven stoops to your mean life. From this moment dare to believe that He will do for you what you cannot do for yourself, and make you live a blameless life. "Faithful is He that calleth you; He will do it." *He*, He, HE, HE will do it. He *will* do it. He will *do* it. He will do *it*.

*What makes us so sure?* Because He has called us to it, and has taught us to hunger and yearn for it.

Does He put the yearning for the summer land in a swallow's breast, when there is no summer land for it? Does He teach us to yearn for immortality when there is no far land beyond this where we shall be at rest? And does He teach any man or woman here to desire, with a hunger past words, a pure and blameless life, and will He not make it theirs?

But do not be afraid of God. *He is the God of Peace*, and whatever He does will be done so gently and quietly that it will be as the opening of a summer's day, the footsteps of spring over the woods, the breathing of a sleeping infant. If you resist and antagonize Him, there may be storm and hurricane—but these need not be, if you yield to His will.

And do not shrink from holiness, as though it were something *unnatural*, and would divorce you from all that is innocent and right in human life. *Spell 'holiness' as 'wholeness.'* The holy man is the whole man. Sanctification is the deliverance of our nature from the blight of sin and the restoration of the image which the Creator stamped on man in its first creation. The Redeemer does not annihilate or resist any natural function implanted by the Creator. The holy man is the best father, brother, son, friend, companion, because the most natural.

Do not dread sanctification, which is not '*it*' but *He*, not a thing but a person, not a process but a life. Do you want to be sanctified? Let in the Sanctifier. When God enters a day, it is a holy day; when He enters a bush, the ground around is holy; when He enters a building, it is a holy place

or temple; when He enters the heart of a man to fill it, he becomes a holy man.

THE METHOD OF THE BLAMELESS LIFE

is presented in the words: "Your spirit, soul and body." The Apostle prays that God would sanctify them wholly, in spirit, soul and body.

You remember that the temple stood on the level of Mount Zion, surrounded by a parapet of white marble, and the colonnades in which our Savior walked and taught. Within this area stood the temple itself. Two-thirds of it was the holy place, and one-third the most holy. The holy place was devoted to the work of the priests; the holy of holies to the indwelling light, the shekinah, between the wings of the cherubim.

Now these three—the outer court, the holy place, and the most holy, where the Shekinah shone—represent our body (which touches the outer world), our soul (which is the seal of our will and mind and personality), and our spirit (in which we come into contact with our heavenly Father.)

I pray God, says the Apostle, that He may sanctify you wholly—not the spirit without the soul, not the soul without the body; but that body, soul, and spirit should be possessed by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in the most holy place of the spirit, shining through the whole nature, making darkness and impurity and evil impossible, and at last irradiating the very body with light and beauty.

When a man is born into this world, he is endowed with spirit, soul, and body. But as yet the

spirit is untenanted, it is like the holy of holies before the Shekinah, the light of God's presence, entered it. The spirit's capacity for God is in the man, but not opened as yet to receive God.

At regeneration, the Spirit brings into our spirit the germ of the new life, which is Jesus Christ Himself. "He that hath the Son hath life"—and he that hath life, hath the Son. So the Apostle could freely say to all his Corinthian converts, "What! Know ye not how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. xiii., 5).

From the moment of our regeneration, then, the Lord Jesus is literally in residence within us. We may not have heard His footfalls as He entered and passed into the inner secret of our nature, but He did enter, never more to leave.

At the moment of regeneration, and often for some time afterward, we may not realize the blessed Inmate of our nature. He is there, but we know Him not. He is veiled from us, until it pleases God to tear the veil asunder from the top to the bottom. and to reveal Him. (Gal. I., 16).

Softly as morning light the life of Christ entered your heart. It is within, but it is curtained; and if you would only draw the curtain, if only it were rent in twain, as at the crucifixion, the Son of God who is in you would shine through all the dark spaces of your nature, illumining, irradiating, filling, sanctifying and making your life blameless.

I often think of Enoch Arden in what is one of the sweetest things Tennyson ever wrote; how he comes to his home after they thought him dead; how he steals around the garden, and in the gloam-

ing looks into the window, and sees his wife another man's beloved, and his children growing up with their children. So he steals back to a lonely life, and ultimately to a solitary death in the little inn where "the waters break against the wall." But Tennyson says he was not all unhappy. Firm faith and prayer, like fountains of sweet water in the sea, kept him a living soul.

I have often thought of those fountains of sweet water. Jesus Himself becomes a fountain of sweet water in the midst of a very desolate and weary life.

Now

WHAT IS THE VEIL

which hangs between you and the presence of Jesus? It is probably some misunderstanding between yourself and another. What veils man from man, also veils man from God. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. Perhaps you are unwilling to forgive someone who has wronged you; or you will not ask forgiveness from one whom you have wronged. Perhaps you owe restitution money on a debt or a theft of twenty or thirty years ago; oh, the thought of this, the conviction that you ought to make it good, is a thickly-woven veil between your Lord and you. Or perhaps there is some duty, some obedience to a positive command, which you ought to perform, but which you have evaded and shirked. Any of these things is enough to curtain off the indwelling of Jesus, and make it a dim uncertainty.

Oh, let God reveal to you the cause of your shad-

owed experience! Then dare to obey Him at whatever cost. Make right what is wrong, repay what is owing, obey what is incumbent. Do it though it cost you an earthquake and a crucifixion. The peace of God will immediately settle upon you, and the light within will break forth speedily.

This kind of teaching should be as good for business men as a revival of trade, for if people acted up to it, they would pay their bills. Women would pay for their last dresses. The men would go and pay for their last coats. People who have been owing money for the last two or three years would write a check for it. Relatives who have not spoken to one another for the last ten or twelve years would contrive to make up their quarrel. There would be a dragging and tearing down of the veil between man and woman, woman and woman, and then would be disclosed the face of Christ.

Jesus is in you, but waits to fill you. Away with every hindrance, and let Him sanctify you wholly! As He fills, He will drive your sin before Him, as the steam in the radiator drives the cold before it when you turn the valve. The radiator is an ugly piece of cold iron. It is as destitute of heat as you and I of holiness. When you want heat in it, you must let it in from outside, just as, if you want holiness, you must get it from the Holy One. If you turn the valve a little way, just half a turn, a little heat comes in, but the steam makes a terrible noise, which always makes me think of people who have just enough holiness to make them miserable. But when you turn the valve until you can turn no more, and the whole aperture is open toward the

supply of hot air or steam, it rushes freely in. Oh that this were a true emblem of the condition of our hearts toward God, when the whole nature lies unveiled before Him, that every part of it may be sanctified, because God-possessed.

You never think of brushing darkness out before letting the light in; you

LET IN THE LIGHT,

and it drives the darkness before it. You cannot turn out evil, but open your whole heart to Jesus, who is within you, and He will chase the evil before Him and sanctify every part of you by His indwelling and all-pervading presence.

It is a good thing, therefore, to begin every day by saying over, and meditating on the following words:

"I believe in the name of the Son of God. Therefore I am in Him, having redemption and life by His Spirit. And He is in me, and all fitness is in Him. To Him I belong by purchase, conquest, and self-surrender; to me He belongs for all my hourly need. There is no veil or cloud between my Lord and me. There is no obstacle to His indwelling and infilling. I yield my entire being to Him; and what I cannot do He can."

This is sanctification! The indwelling of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, keeping us from sin, and fulfilling through us the full purpose of His Will.

## VIII.

## REIGNING IN LIFE.

"Much more they which receive abundance of grace shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus."—Romans v., 17.

How significant, how exhilarating are these words! Not the life when we have passed the gate of pearl, but the life that is now; not our life when we stand on the brow of the transfiguration mount, but the life at home, or in the daily walks and common places of existence. It is possible that there is a life to be lived in the common round and the daily task, so royal, so radiant, so blessed, that those who live it may be said to *reign* in life.

In a meeting of comparatively obscure people in New York, I heard a washerwoman say that ever since the power of God had come into her life, washing to her was what playing on the piano was to young ladies. I don't know what notion she had of piano-playing, but she looked very happy about it.

Do you reign in your life? When you speak of reigning in life you have a conception at once of *victory*. Is your life one of victory? Do you put your foot down on passion, or are you beneath its heel? Do you know what it is to live day after day free from known sin, delivered from the power of the adversary, and able by the help of God to tread

upon the high places? There are a good many people who *exist.* Do you *live?* Have you the abundant life of Christ, the life that is more than victorious?

When we speak of reigning in life, we think also of *a grace in life.* You may do what is right, but you do it grudgingly or with difficulty; the wheels creak a good deal; there is a jar. Nobody coming into your home could point out any breach of the ten commandments, and yet somehow there is a want of ease and joy and blessedness. Someone put an advertisement in one of our papers the other day, "Wanted, a Christian companion, but she must be happy." As if Christian companions were not generally happy people. What is your life in this respect? Is there a consciousness with those who surround you in your daily life that religion is a bright and blessed and beautiful thing? Do you commend it, and so reign?

Then I think we associate the idea of *bounty* with those that reign. You expect the king to be able to throw largess to his subjects. Are you able to give away much of your religion, or are you so occupied in keeping the little spark aglow that you have none to spare for others?

If you are not living a royal life it is very necessary to find out the reason, and I want to help you to find it if I may.

1. It may be, first, because *you do not realize that the abundance of God's grace is for you.*

You may have an idea that there is some favoritism with God, that some people are born happy, and that their religious life must be different from that of

others because their temperament and disposition are so happy.

There is

NO FAVORITISM WITH GOD.

Just as the spring flowers, the sunshine, and the pure air are for all, as free to the beggar as to the sovereign, so God's abundant grace is for every man and woman, and there is nothing that anyone has ever had which you may not have if you will. The same stream is passing your door, but you do not utilize the power to drive your water wheel. The same electricity is in the air, but you haven't learned to make it flash your messages or do the work of your home. The same grace that made a Luther, a Knox, a Latimer, a Ridley Havergal or a Spurgeon, is for you today, and if you are living a low-down life, beaten and thwarted and dashed down and constantly compelled to admit shortcomings and failure, understand it is not because there is any favoritism on God's part, because all the Holy Ghost's power and everything which is stored in Jesus Christ is waiting to make you a saint, and to lift you to the level which you pine for in your best moments. All the power of the Almighty is waiting to help you; the same abundant grace is waiting for us all.

2. If we admit this, the reason why we do not reign in life may be because we do not distinguish between *praying* and *taking*.

There is a profound difference between entreating for a thing and appropriating it. You may admit that God's abundant grace is near you through Jesus

Christ, and yet you may not quite see the necessity of learning how to take. Some people are always

TELEGRAPHING TO HEAVEN

for God to send a cargo of blessing to them, but they are not at the wharf-side to unload the vessel when it comes. How many of God's richest blessings for which you have been praying for years have come right close to you, but you do not know how to lay hold of and use them.

Mark: "They that *receive* abundance of grace shall reign." The emphasis is not on grace, not on abundance, but on *receiving* it. The whole grace of God may be round your life today, but if you have not learned to take it in, it won't help you.

All that God has is within your reach, but you must learn to take it. If a man hears that he has suddenly come into a fortune, and that money is waiting for him in the bank, he goes there by the first train, but he doesn't ask for it as if it were to be made a present to him. He goes in and says:

"This is my name. You have money standing in that name, and I have come to claim it."

There are many things in prayer that we cannot be certain of because we have no definite promise to stand upon, but there are also many things in the Book which are waiting for us to come for them, and God says, "If you will come and take them you may have them." You have only to go to God, and, supposing you are in a right condition (it may be that you are not), you may open your entire nature to God, and believe that as you claim, God gives. "He that asketh, receiveth." If you want Christ to

be your purity, Christ to be your power, Christ to be your salvation, kneel before Him; breathe in what God has promised to bestow; and reckon that as you open your nature to take, God Almighty gives. You have no emotion, no rush of feeling, no consciousness of reception, but you leave your closet and go forth to your daily life, you descend into the midst of turmoil and temptation, but all the time you are reckoning that what you dared humbly and reverently to claim in the name of Jesus, God Almighty gave.

The devil says, "You have nothing."

You say, "I have."

"You don't feel it?"

"I don't."

"You haven't it then."

"Yes, I have, because 'he that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and I reckon on God that it is so whether I feel it or not."

3. But suppose that this yet doesn't quite touch your case. It may be that *your hands are not empty.*

You need to have the empty hand if you would be filled. You cannot take because your hands are full of evil, or of the world.

Dr. Guinness told me that at one time all the water was shut out of their house in Derbyshire. They couldn't understand what happened, and they went down to search for the cause. They went to the water-works and it wasn't there. At last they took up the joint between the house and the main, and found a great toad there. The house could not receive the water from the reservoir because the orifice was choked.

God is going to turn His search-light upon things in your life that you have hidden from your dearest. Are you not conscious that if certain sins were mentioned, a certain sin, you would wince? You are living in the indulgence of some evil habit; you are living for the world or the flesh; you have some secret in your life that keeps cropping up in your holiest moments. There may be a man or a woman living somewhere with whom you have vowed you would never speak again. There is a record somewhere that has never been cleared up. God Almighty cannot save you unless you are willing that He should deal with that; you must be judged as those who do not want to be ashamed at last, but would hear the Master's blessed "Well done" when they meet Him. You must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. You must be prepared to let God sweep out of your life that which is hindering you from accepting His best gifts.

Oh, I pray that we may bury once and forever, as in the grave of Christ, the shackles which have fettered us, the sins which have bound us, and may find the new life of Christ with abundant grace which shall enable us to reign in life.

## IX.

## LIVING THE LIFE OF JESUS.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."—John vi: 57.

An eastern prince was accustomed to retire for an hour every morning to a certain chamber in his palace, which was carefully reserved from every common eye, and in which he said that he found the secret of his life. When the room was entered, it was discovered that it was furnished like a shepherd's hut, for his forefathers were shepherds. There, with the most simple surroundings, he had been accustomed quietly to meditate upon his past, his present, and his future.

I want to conduct you into Christ's inner chamber in which His spirit dwelt, and the door of which He has left open for us, that we also may enter and dwell there. I desire to give you what seems to me the one secret of our Savior's life, that it may likewise become the one secret of yours and mine. From the words of our text we may infer that what the Father was to Jesus, Jesus is willing to be to you and to me. Everything that Jesus said of His relationship to the Father, we may say of our relationship to Jesus. The Gospel of John is peculiarly the book of our Savior's inner life, and the book of

our own inner life, because in the place of the Father we may substitute the Savior's name. Thus we may read the words of our text, "As the living Savior hath sent me, so I live by the Savior." If you take that Gospel according to John and substitute Christ for the Father, and hang on Christ as Christ hung on God, you will hardly ever need a book of private devotion other than that which is furnished by the golden book of the inner life, yielded in St. John's gospel.

I.

The first truth to which I wish to call your attention is this: *Our Savior might have lived an independent life.*

He was the Holy One before He stooped to us and laid aside the use of the attributes of His Godhead. During His human life He might at any moment have availed Himself of His divine attributes and might have lived His human life in the power of them. Whenever He was hungry, instead of waiting for Peter or others to provide, He might have used His creative power to transform the very stones into loaves of bread. Had He so chosen, He might have planned His own life and from the transfiguration mountain have stepped into paradise. He might have spoken His own words and have poured forth upon men such a flood of eloquence as would have shone on the pages of literature with dazzling brilliancy. He might have done His work by His own power, working His miracles merely to increase His own reputation. He might have sought His own glory as the supreme end of

His life, so displaying His power and glory that His divinity should be apparent to all.

II.

Our Lord Jesus might have lived an independent life, and second, *Satan was always urging Him to do it.*

Straight from the river Jordan Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. You who have been baptized for service are almost certain to be led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, just because God desires to do a mighty work in your soul. The oak, which is to live for a hundred years, must be rooted and moored to stand the storm, and God, wanting you to become a strong, sturdy oak, will most certainly lead you into temptation. Temptation is not sin if the temptation is resisted. The effect of being tempted is to root us more in Christ.

The first thing the devil said to Jesus was, "Thou art the Son of God. God has just owned thee as such, as the second person of the holy Trinity. Thou hast all power. Now use that power for Thyself, and make these stones bread."

That was the crucial point in our Lord's life, and He said, "No: I am going to be a dependent human being. Inasmuch as those whom I have come to save depend upon my Father and upon me, I will learn what it is to depend by faith absolutely upon my Father. If my Father does not feed me, I will die of hunger. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God, and I am going to wait for my Father to speak."

When our Lord said that He at once definitely refused to live the independent life which would have been possible, and elected to live a life of constant dependence upon the Father.

III.

Look at our Lord's life. In His birth God the Father gave Him life. It was not His own life; He could not do as He liked with it, and after He had lived it for thirty-three years the Father asked again for that life. And Jesus in dying said, "Father, receive my life." It might have seemed that from the moment when He descended into the grave there was no longer any life for Him, but through the cross He came into a richer life than ever. He gave up the natural to get the eternal; He gave up the life of the flesh to receive the life of the Spirit; He gave up the life that could die, that He might receive the resurrection life of power to impart. Jesus Christ held His life in trust,—God gave it, God maintained it, God required it, and all the time the Son said to the Father, "I live by thee." God was as much the breath of Christ's life as the air is of our natural life. It was as if His natural life kept saying to God, "May I live another hour?" and the Father said, "Live." Every minute the attitude of Christ was taking, taking, taking life from the Father. So we should live; always drawing from Christ, the fountain of life; always receiving from God life for our life. We must live because of Jesus.

So in the *plan* of our Lord's life. Sometimes He said to His disciples, "Let us go across the lake and

rest." He might have chosen to pursue that plan of rest, but when the people hurried around the lake and asked to be taught and fed, in their intrusion on His quiet He saw the Father's plan. Once when He was going to Jairus' home, a woman who had an issue of blood stopped Him, I know not for how long, and in the touch of her finger He saw the intrusion of the Father's plan for the day, and He stopped His own plan to follow it. In that wonderful fifth chapter of John, He says, "The Son can originate nothing—the Son can do nothing from Himself—but what He sees the Father doing." When He was in Joseph's shop, as a young boy of twelve or fourteen, and saw Joseph making yokes for the oxen, He studied how Joseph made them, and fashioned the yoke on which He was working like it—always copying Joseph. Then afterward when He came to live among men, He was always watching for the development of the Father's plan, and the things which God did in the unseen and eternal world, Jesus did in His earthly life. So this plan was the plan of God.

Jesus also depended on the Father for *His words.* In one of the most beautiful translations of the Revised Version in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah we are told that God the Father came every morning to the Son and awakened Him, whispering into His ear the words which He was to say during the day, so that as Jesus went forth to teach the people day by day He did not speak His own words, but the words which the Father gave Him. On the mountain of Beatitudes, when He finished one paragraph, I suppose that He would look up and say, "What

next?" And that wonderful farewell discourse recorded in John consisted of the words of the Father received by Jesus as He spoke them.

Then as to *His miracles.* In that wonderful fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus says, "The words that I say unto you, I speak not from myself, but the Father abiding in me, doeth His works." We might almost say that we do not know Jesus, because He was so completely dependent upon the Father that His words were the Father's, His works were the Fathers, His life was the Father's, and in Jesus we do not see Jesus but we see the Father mirrored in His words and works and life.

So also about *His will.* He had a will of His own, because He said, "Not my will." We do not understand the mystery of His nature but we remember that He said, "Not my will but thine be done."

We know, too, how He sought *the Father's glory.* He said, "I have glorified thee on earth. It matters little what men say or think of me, I at least have given them a new thought about thyself. I have glorified thee on the earth"; and He promised to answers our prayers, "that the Father might be glorified in the Son." Now He is there in the glory waiting to find a prayer that we have uttered that He can answer to glorify His Father; He at once answers that kind of a prayer, because He is so set on this purpose. In that last prayer He also said, "I would like to be glorified, my Father; give me glory that the Son may glorify thee." It was as if Jesus Christ was only ambitious to be well thought of in order that He might make God the Father the better considered.

## IV.

My fourth point obviously is this: If our blessed Lord chose this life of dependence out of all possible lives that He might have lived, *does it not seem wisest, most blessed, most Christlike, for you and me to give up living the independent life* in the flesh and to begin from this moment to depend upon Christ as Christ depended upon God?

If Jesus Christ held His life moment by moment in the balance at God's dictation, should not we receive the help and expend our life as Jesus wills? If Jesus Christ allowed His plan always to give way to God's plan, do you not see that instead of scheming, planning, and striving to get our own way so much, we ought always to be looking out for God's plan and to yield submissively before it? If Jesus Christ gave up His words for the words which the Father put into His lips, do we not greatly mistake in trying to elaborate our sentences and beautify them, instead of day by day waiting to receive the words our Savior gives us? If you would depend day by day on the Master for the power of His life, opening all your being, and preferring the power imparted to any power of your own, I need not say how your life would at once become divine.

Let us receive from our glorified Lord that life-power with which He is invested, that He may glorify and ennoble our daily existence. Let us so dress, so adorn our houses, so spend our time, so earn money, that men may think better of our Lord. We should not expend one hour for any other purpose than that our life might be glorifying Jesus

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Christ for being, or doing, or suffering, or giving,—the four departments of Christ's life.

Do you not see the beauty of having such a life that you might yield it back into the ocean from whence it came? Do you not see this great prerogative of your manhood given to you that you may give it back again? We have been so foolish in the past that we have thought that whatever gifts have been intrusted to us, must be clung to or lost; forgetting it is only those who give away what they have who really keep and get the best. We have clung to our money, forgetting that by giving it away we shall get something better. We have clung to sermons with their eloquence, their chastity of expression, not realizing that just as soon as we give away the human power we get the divine power. We are so afraid of giving away what was only given to us as a trust, that we fail to get what God plans to bestow. I hear my Savior singing as He goes down into the grave, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in death, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." And so He goes down into the valley of death singing, and we know that in death He finds something better than He left.

## V.

My fifth point is this: *The Savior's method may be ours.*

There are two possible methods. Our Lord might always have been crucifying, as it were, His human nature; but He chose the second method and the

better one—that of living a life of perfect communion with God by the Holy Ghost. "I love the Father." "That the world may know that I love the Father." Do you think that there was any difficulty, any agony except once in the supreme act of all when He was called upon to contemplate the possibility of losing the Father's smile? As the thought of being forsaken by the Father came over His soul, a dark eclipse, He said, "Save me from that"; but soon He said, "Not my will even in this, but thine be done." Jesus loved the Father, and there is no difficulty in giving up the self-life when you are in love with the living Christ. The thing for us to do therefore is, not to dwell on the crucifixion, on the giving-up side, but to allow our whole nature to be drawn to the living Christ—not death, but life. Moreover, seek that abounding life which makes it so easy to say No to self. Make the living Jesus the reality of your whole life. Go about saying, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

How can Jesus become to me what the Father was to Jesus?

First: *We must be quiet; we must wait.*

In all music there are rests and sometimes whole bars of rests; so there must be in every life the sitting down quietly and allowing God by the Spirit to make Jesus dwell in us. Jesus often went up on the mountains with the thought of God the Father filling His nature, and there must be times in our life when we give an opportunity for Christ to assert Himself and impress Himself absorbingly on the vision.

Then second: *Be sure to make Jesus the first of everything.*

Remember the first words in our Bible,—"In the beginning God." The story of every day ought to be commenced with the words, In the beginning Jesus. He must be the Alpha, the first, the beginning. If, before you rush into a new enterprise, my brother, you would sit quietly down and be sure Jesus Christ is first, it would save you from landing in many a quagmire. Make Jesus first of every plan, every act, every sermon, everything that can be begun, continued, and ended in Him.

Third: *Make the glory of Jesus your aim.*

You may not *feel* it to be your aim, but *choose* it to be your aim. Always remember this great principle of the Christian's life, that when you cannot feel a thing, you must choose it by act of your will, and then ask God to create in you the emotion which you have chosen to be the motive of your action. Let the glory of Jesus be your aim in every service; let His glory be the thought that animates you in making money, in your housekeeping, in your mission work. Wives often send in requests for prayer for the conversion of their husbands, but frequently they desire it not for the glory of Christ, but that the husband may no longer bring misery and disaster into the life of the wife. We must put the glory of Christ even before the conversion of men.

Then fourth: *Meet God's will in every circumstance.*

I should like to draw a circle, the circle of God's will, and then step into it, and keep in it all my life; then whatever came to me must come through the encircling will of God. If Joseph's brethren put him in the pit, it is not they who sent him into

Egypt, but God. If Judas brings the cup, Jesus says, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" When I am living in the will of God, my enemy may shoot an arrow against me; by the time it reaches me it may glance aside if God wills, but if He wishes it to strike me, by the time it reaches me it has become God's will for me.

Then lastly, *reckon on God.*

Some people are constantly worrying about their faith. I have given up worrying about my faith because I think of God's faithfulness. Begin to count God faithful. It is no use worrying whether I have strength enough to believe a note of hand; the question is, whether the man who signed that check is worthy of trust. Reckon on Christ's faithfulness toward you.

Go over these steps again: Be still. Make Christ first in everything. Live absolutely for Him. Receive from Him all your words to speak, and works to do, all the power of your life; when in any emergency or need receive from Him, who sent the demand, the power to meet it. Reckon absolutely upon Christ. Meet His will in every circumstance. That is the way that Jesus lived toward His Father; live so toward Jesus.

You may ask me how it was that in the human nature of Christ He so absolutely yielded Himself to the Father. The answer comes from one of the most marvelous books in the Bible, the Epistle of the Hebrews: "Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." I believe that that is what the baptism of Christ meant. At the moment of His baptism, Jesus did the very thing

to His holy, independent life that you and I have been called to do to our natural, sinful, and debased life. The baptism of Jesus Christ, as I understand it, was His saying by symbol and metaphor, "I come to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart." Then on Him there came the blessed Holy Ghost, and it was in the power of the Spirit that He perpetually yielded Himself to God.

If you and I are to live toward Christ as Christ lived toward the Father, we must be baptized into the same Holy Ghost. Whatever your station or occupation may be, you may start to live that life right now, but you may lose the power to live it within twenty-four hours. The only power by which Jesus Christ can help your life is through the infilling of the Holy Ghost. Shall we not have done forever with the independent life and be able to say as never before, "The living Savior hath sent me and He lives in me"? Then you will hear Him responding, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

# X.

## THE SECRET OF FRUITFULNESS.

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."—Genesis xvii. 6.

When God says to a soul, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful," it becomes all others carefully to notice the circumstances and conditions under which that promise is made.

There has been a great amount of heart-searching throughout the church in recent months because of the failure of conversions. Great communities of Christians, after toiling for a whole twelvemonth, have been compelled to confess that their ranks are not increased by a single unit. Ministers, well furnished for their work, have had no sheaves to bring from the whitened fields, and the total aggregate of conversions from the world hardly avails to meet the drain caused by an inevitable leakage. Oh! if God should say of some hundreds of us, "I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you," with what new hope we should anticipate our work! Would it not be a day for which all other days were made and waiting, if the Eternal God were to speak to some child of His by these lines, and say, "Thy name shall no more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, the father of a great multitude"?

### I. THE TIME.

"When Abram was ninety years old and nine."

He was an old man and well stricken in age. According to the laws of human life it was not likely that he should have a child. Ask any men belonging to the neighboring clans, who would be Abram's heir; they would have answered:

"The son of a slavewoman, Ishmael by name. There is no child by Sarah, his wedded wife, and no likelihood of there being one. Poor man, it seems strange that all his vast possessions should go to such an heir!"

So men talked! And it was at such a time that God stepped in and said:

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."

Years ago you thought you could effect something in your life. You had energy, genius, the grace of oratory, the power of personal attraction and fascination. You could sway men—men gathered around you and recognized their born leader. Perhaps you could organize efficiently; beneath your word and deft hand, a rabble would fall into rank and become an army. The faculty of selection was yours; intrepid courage, wise counsel, quick sympathy. Possibly you had money; you thought it was simply a question of employing the best talent and equipping your workers in the best style. But all this is over now, and you are compelled reluctantly to confess that the total residuum is disappointing. At the best, our Ishmaels are like wild asses' colts. And you are coming to think that the remainder of your life will never rise above the dead levels of the past, will never achieve any large success for God, will never be fruitful in the conversion of men.

"I will do my best," you say, "building up be-

lievers, if I may not win the ungodly. I can train children, but never bear them. Mine the fashioning of the stones, but not the quarrying."

To such God comes with His assurance, "I am able to make thee exceeding fruitful." Fulfil the Divine conditions, and there is no reason why the great multitude should not hail you, Parent!

"It cannot be! Nature forbids. The experience of the past forbids. Declining brilliancy of gift and energy of power forbid. Other branches recently grafted into the vine may stoop to the ground with their heavy fruitage, but I shall always be as a dry tree."

Wait! Ponder these words again. Write them upon the tablets of thine heart. "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto him, and said, I am the Almighty God." "What nature cannot do, Almightiness can. What human energy cannot effect, the Divine Spirit will. Till now thy night has hindered Me, has forced Me to wait. In these many decades My night has been thwarted, frustrated, neutralized by thy trust in thyself. But now that this has passed, there is room for My Omnipotence to work, and I, the Almighty God, swear by Myself, since I can swear by no greater, that if thou wilt fulfil the conditions of My covenant, I will make thee abundantly fruitful, and thou shalt be father to a great multitude."

### II. THE CONDITION.

"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

This is the one prime and irreversible condition for the life which shall become fruitful. We have

walked before our friends, our neighbors, our church and the world, very eager to win their regard and approval. Each step we have taken with the consciousness that we were being watched, and with the secret desire that it should be approved. All that must be changed. "Walk before Me," He says, Whose eyes are as a flame of fire. "Let your eye be single. Let your intention be Godward. Let it be your one aim to please Me. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro in all the earth * * * " "My eyes are ever toward the Lord."

The word rendered "perfect" does not mean that moral blamelessness with which we are accustomed to associate it. It connotes whole-heartedness, entire surrender, absolute consecration, up to the measure of light. Be perfect; there must be no reserve. Be perfect: there must be no Babylonish garment withheld from the fire. Be perfect: there must be no gold, silver or precious stones which are not freely exposed to the searching tongue of flame. Be perfect: there must be no lowing of the herds or bleating of the flocks which have been unsurrendered to God.

It is the prime condition of fruitfulness. Have we conformed to it? Is there a glad acquiescence to God's every command? Have we presented ourselves as a living sacrifice? Are we willing that God should have all? Do we recognize His will as the one blessed code of life? And are we prepared to walk like this, step by step, though the feet bleed as we plod through the tangled brake or pass over the jagged rock? Then take heart, for it is to such that God says:

"I will make thee exceeding fruitful."

III. THE CERTAINTY.

"I will *make My covenant* between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

There will be no doubt about the matter. Where God binds Himself by a covenant He does not draw back. When He passes His word it binds Him. Have the waters of the Deluge ever returned to drown the world? Has He lost one soul included in the everlasting agreement ratified by the Blood of the Cross? Has He broken the covenants of day or night, of the return of the seasons, of His care for man?

God's covenants originate with Himself: "between *Me* and thee." All the promises emanate from God's heart. It is of grace that He says, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful." We cannot earn, or deserve, or win; we just fall on our face and let God talk right on.

God's covenant is individual and personal: "between Me and *thee*." Every believer is included in the covenant entered into with his Head, but there are great moments in the history of the soul when God accosts it—in a moment of reverie or solitude—and says, "From to-day, behold I will make My covenant with thee. I am for thee, be thou for Me. I am all for thee, be thou all for Me. I will give Myself to thee in ever-deepening manifestation, if thou wilt give thyself to Me in ever-deepening consecration."

Has God ever said this to you? Get alone and give Him the opportunity. Recite the provisions of

the new covenant, till one of them sparkles out as if struck by a ray direct from the Throne. And let this be your attitude specially when you partake of the Lord's Supper, the emblem of the Blood by which the covenant was ratified. To your wistful soul God will draw nigh, and whilst you are fallen to your face in humility and wonder, He will talk to you and say: "Behold, I make My covenant with thee."

### IV. THE SIGN.

"This is My covenant: ye shall be circumcised."

Can we ever in this connection forget the words of the apostle: "In Christ also ye are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ?"

This, too, is inevitable. There can be no spiritual fruitfulness which has not been preceded by the use of the sharp knife. Here is one of those profound revelations of the purpose of God in the symbolism of the Old Testament which establishes its divine origin. How wonderful that before Abraham could be the father of a great multitude, he had to submit to suffering! But how precisely the figure fits the spiritual analogy which we are considering. In those who are to be spiritually fruitful, there must be the putting off of the old habits, the affections and evil desires of the old nature, the desire of vain-glory and admiration and praise; there must be the environment of the Cross.

An eminent servant of God once said that he hedged himself around with the Cross of Christ, so

that whatever advances were made to him or words said to him, all might come to him through that hedge of fire. Nothing less will avail.

Do you shrink from this sharp cutting-off? Remember it is made without hands, but it is the circumcision of Christ—that is, it is effected by hands which were nailed to the Cross for very love, and whose gentle touch often brought healing and comfort to the sore-suffering ones. Into Thy hands, O Son of God, we commit our spirits, that Thou shouldest free us of everything which hinders our fruitfulness.

Take these assurances. God quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as if they were. In hope, believe in hope. Without being weakened in faith dare to consider yourself now as good as dead. Dare to look at the deadness of the church and neighborhood with which you are associated. Then look unto the promise of God. Dwell on it. So only will you not waver through unbelief, so only will you wax strong through faith. Give Him glory, count on the faithfulness of Him that promised, and the titter of incredulity shall be turned into the Isaac-laughter, as you welcome a spiritual seed which shall multiply, as the years pass, like the grains of the shore and the stars of the Milky Way.

## XI.

## THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."—Hebrews 13: 20,21.

This text reminds us of those many stars which are twin suns in the firmament of heaven, revolving around each other, but which, observed from our planet, seem to be one. It is composed of two distinct thoughts, which are entwined one around the other, increasing the common light, and circling around a common center. The one magnifies the great Shepherd of the sheep, and recounts God's work in resurrection, in virtue of which He was brought again from the agony and darkness of death to the right hand of God and the pasture-lands of eternity; the other concerns God's work within the soul, in virtue of which He works in us what is well-pleasing in His sight. First the objective fact, then the subjective counterpart, and each attributable to the work of God.

But why is it necessary that these two truths, apparently so remote from each other, should be brought into such close contact? And why is it necessary to emphasize them in this, the concluding

passage of this Epistle, where we expect to find the most cogent and practical application of the great truths on which the writer has been expatiating?

The former of these questions will be answered as we proceed; the latter may best be met by an illustration.

It is reported that travelers in Japan, during the severe winter which casts its mantle of snow and grasp of frost on the country, are startled to find a rich, luxuriant, sub-tropical growth, so that the bamboo, the orange, and the palm flourish in vigorous beauty, whilst the biting blasts tear madly across the plains. The explanation is probably to be found in the evidences of comparatively recent volcanic action; it is therefore probable that fire is still burning below the surface; and these trees, though they stand amid arctic cold, nevertheless strike their roots into tropical heat. Arctic winter above; tropical heat beneath. Thus, amid the pitiless storms of daily life, it becomes us to strike our roots down into the deep philosophy of redemption, and find our quickening and help in considering the blessed work of the God of Peace in our hearts.

## I.

### THE OBJECT ON WHICH GOD HAS SET HIS HEART.

Stated briefly, it is that He may accomplish in us His perfect will, and realize a life which will please Him, so that He may look down upon us in complacency and say, "This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased."

This twofold object is clearly stated—"perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight."

*For this, God has taught us to hunger.*

Deep down in the heart of man He has set eternity; that is, yearnings and desires which cannot be satisfied with mere immortality, or immunity from pain and sorrow. We might have these, but if we were not righteous, if we did not do God's will, if we were not pleasing Him and fulfilling His ideal, we should be always conscious of a secret infinite regret.

Such hunger is prophetic of its satisfaction. The sea-birds do not roam the acres of sparkling wavelets in vain; nor in vain do the young lions roar after their food. The babe does not cry for sustenance which is not stored for it, or the youth demand the love which the maiden cannot give. It were rather a devil who should make the appetite without providing means for its satisfaction. But our God creates the desire, that He may give it realization. The very desire is blessed. As we desire, we possess. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

And God wants us to realize His ideal *perfectly*.

If we take that word as meaning fully, completely, we shall obtain a true and helpful meaning. A lily, it has been truly said, is a very beautiful object, though in England it does not attain to the full beauty of the Victoria Regia of Australia. A voice may be very sweet for the drawing-room, which would be altogether deficient in compass for the concert-room. We may be easily able to fulfil

the measure of a comparatively small and limited sphere, when we would altogether fail in the greater one. A linnet sings very sweetly, though she cannot vie with the nightingale. It is extremely delightful to see the swallows as they dart to and fro perfected in flight up to the measure of their requirement, though unable to attain the majestic flight of the eagle. So God wants us to be perfect up to the measure of our capacity and sphere—"perfect in every good work to do His will."

God seems to say, "I want you to be full-orbed, to fill up the circumference of your disc with light, to be as strong and sweet and gentle as possible, to please Me in all directions, to attain to a perfect balance of character, to add in your faith virtue, and in your virtue knowledge, self-control, godliness, love of the brethren, love."

*This, moreover, is what He is prepared to realize.* Inasmuch as He has justified us and brought us to this point, it is evident that He is confident of being able, under certain conditions, to realize in us His perfect ideal. The only point at which He can fail is in our not being willing to give Him a free hand. But if you are prepared, with all the passion and weakness of your nature, to let God Almighty mould your life in His workshop and come with all His power into your heart, He will realize His object. Though *you* have failed a thousand times in your efforts, yet from today, if you will learn God's secret, the Eternal God who raised from the dead Jesus Christ by the mighty lift of His Omnipotence, is prepared to come into the sepulchre of your life, and thence lift you up by His

Eternal Spirit, into the perfect ideal and pattern of His Son.

## II.

### THE DIRECTION IN WHICH GOD WORKS WITHIN A MAN.

First, *He adjusts him.*

That word *perfect* in the Greek is the word *articulate.* It is a surgeon's word for setting a dislocated limb. The Eternal God is prepared to bring our will, which is our deepest self, into exact and living union with His own, so that it may work there as a bone in the socket of the joint.

The mill of the friend of a friend of mine in Yorkshire was one day stopped because something had gone wrong with the engine that drove the machines through the entire factory. Those on the spot did all they could to re-adjust and start it, but in vain. Finally, in their extremity, they bethought themselves of an old man, who lived in the village, and sent for him. He came, looked at the engine, and did something that seemed as slight as the inserting of a pin or the turning of a screw. Immediately the pistons began to oscillate, and the huge fly-wheel to revolve.

Some days afterward he sent in his bill of charges, which amounted to twenty-six dollars. He was summoned by the manager to account for what seemed an altogether exorbitant and excessive charge. But the man justified it thus:

"I charged one dollar for doing the work, and twenty-five for knowing how to do it."

Now it may be that your life has been full of failure lately, which you cannot understand, and

you are at a loss to account for it. Ah! soul, it is probably a very small thing which is wrong, but it has been sufficient to break your union with God, and it must be dealt with by Him, who alone knows how. "The God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus," alone knows how to do it, and alone possesses the requisite dexterity and power of hand and wrist to do it.

Stand at that empty grave, and behold how He brought again from the dead the precious body which weeping disciples had borne thither! Are you in the grave, not for doing the will of God as He did, but for failing to do it? Have you been restrained too long, as in the impotence and silence of death? Do you long to come forth into the heavenly places where Jesus reigns? Then, let God, by one strong, skilful wrench, in which love and power combine, put you in joint with His will, and then you, too, shall step up from the grave in the steps of the Good and Great Shepherd, and enter into all the fulness and blessedness of His victorious life.

Second, *When we are adjusted, God will work through us.*

The branch cannot do anything. The clusters that redden in the autumn sunshine are the direct product of the root. We have acted and spoken as though God needed apologists and defenders. Nay, souls, stand out of the way! Ye might as well prove the existence of the sun! Stand out of the way; let the sun shine! But God needs hands, feet, lips, hearts, brains, that through these He may elaborate His ideals.

You say that you will never be able to do His will, or to perform what pleases Him. Aye, but you will, if only you will yield yourself to Him, first, that He may adjust, and secondly, that He may work in and through you that which is well pleasing in His sight.

## III.

### HIS MODEL.

God's model is the resurrection of the Shepherd. "He brought again from the dead the Shepherd."

Death is want of motion, vitality and power. A corpse lies placid and helpless. Nature appeals to it from without in vain, and it can exert no influence on the outer world; and yet, though Christ the Shepherd was held by the grave, by hades, and by the devil, God raised Him. And if your soul is in the grave of habit, paralyzed and powerless, God who raised the Shepherd can raise the sheep; He who raised the Head can raise the member; He who lifted Jesus to the heavenlies can lift you.

*He will do it as the God of Peace.*

How peaceful was the resurrection! I know there was the earthquake and the rolling away of the stone, but the resurrection of Christ itself was a very mysterious, noiseless act. He quietly arose, wrapped together the cerements of the grave, and put on the vesture of light as a garment. He came forth with footsteps so gentle that the flowerets and blades of grass did not bend beneath His tread, and He passed out with no noise or footfall ringing in the dawn. Thus He began His beneficent ministry among men like the gentlest and therefore the

strongest forces of nature. At last He glided upwards from the Ascension Mount without blare of trumpet or sound of opening heavens.

So our buried life and power shall rise to-day at the call of the God of peace. Do not be afraid. God will not hurt you. He does not work in paroxysms, but gradually and quietly. He raised Christ in spite of all the devil could do to keep Him back; He will raise you in spite of all the devil can do to keep you down. Rise, soul, rise, and live in resurrection, glory and power!

*And He will do it through the Shepherd.*

We have been thinking much of the great God, and it is all true; but when you are nearest God, and most conscious of His power, when you look into His face, you will see it is your Shepherd's. God works through Jesus. He deals with the flock and each member of it through the Shepherd. Occupy yourself, then, with the Shepherd, keep Him in view, follow Him closely, dwell on His words, follow His steps, absorb yourself with Him. It is in connection with Him, and through His mediation, that the energy of the Divine might shall reach you.

Do you doubt this—it all seems too wonderful? Take heart! You are one with Jesus in the eternal covenant that He ratified with His blood. God has entered into covenant relations that He cannot break with your soul. Be of good cheer. What He has done for the Great Shepherd He will do for all who are included in His flock.

# MAN'S QUESTIONS; GOD'S ANSWERS

**Am I accountable to God?**

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

**Has God seen all my ways?**

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

**Does He charge me with sin?**

"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Galatians 3:22). "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

**Will He punish sin?**

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

**Must I perish?**

"God is not willing that any perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

**How can I escape?**

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

**Is He *able* to save me?**

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25).

**Is He willing?**

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

**Am I saved on believing?**

"He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John 3:36).

**Can I be saved now?**

"*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

**As I am?**

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

**Shall I not fall away?**

"Him that is able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24).

**If saved, how should I live?**

"They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them" (2 Corinthians 5:25).

**What about death, and eternity?**

"I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

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